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ABSTRACT

As a solution to the problems presented by approaches to teaching English composition that are almost purely cognitive in nature, an experimental course was offered for freshmen at the Miami-Dade Community College. The course was designed to be holistic and confluent, synthesizing both the cognitive and affective domains by incorporating Gestalt therapy techniques into the teaching of writing skills. Course exercises focused on the concepts of communication and awareness; organization skills were not introduced until students had developed confidence in their ability to generate worthwhile writing content. The course was evaluated in four ways, including administration of the Personality Orientation Inventory and assessment by a panel of English teachers. Findings indicated that the course had a positive effect on the students' writing skills, self-actualization, and willingness to communicate orally, and the students themselves reported greater enjoyment in writing. Course materials and exercises comprise one-third of the document; appendixes include the forms used in evaluation. (CC)

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The Development, Implementation, and Evaluation of a Model for Teaching Composition Which Utilizes Gestalt Therapy Techniques

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A MAJOR APPLIED RESEARCH PROJECT
PRESENTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR
THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

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Linda Tixier

Miami, Florida

April, 1977

Abstract of a Major Applied Research Project Presented to Nova University in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Education

THE DEVELOPMENT, IMPLEMENTATION, AND EVALUATION OF A MODEL FOR TEACHING COMPOSITION WHICH UTILIZES GESTALT THERAPY TECHNIQUES

By

Linda Tixier

April, 1977

There is presently a great deal of unrest in the specific area of the teaching of English Composition. The "back to basics" controversy is raging in full force. Teaching composition is regarded with distaste by many English teachers, who are increasingly being confronted with students deficient in skills and hostile toward English as a subject, especially in a community college setting. Additionally, there is widespread and general disagreement about the most effective teaching strategies.

By and large, most approaches to the teaching of English Composition have tended to be almost purely cognitive in nature, and there is general agreement that the results have not been entirely satisfactory. More and more educators are beginning to decry the cognitive/affective split. Confluent education, which stresses the synthesis of the cognitive and affective domains, has successfully utilized theory and techniques from Gestalt Therapy in teaching. An application of some of the theory and techniques from Gestalt Therapy to the teaching of English composition could produce desirable outcomes in student writing.

The major purpose of this project was to address the problem of poor skills and attitudes by creating an experimental course for Freshman English Eomposition (English 120) students at Miami-Dade Community College, North Campus. The experimental course was holistic and confluent in that it synthesized the cognitive and affective domains by incorporating Gestalt Therapy techniques into the teaching of writing skills.

The course was implemented in two regular English 120 classes in the Fall Semester, 1976. The course was evaluated in the areas of self-actualization, attitudes toward verbal and written communication, and writing, and by a panel of national experts.

The Personality Orientation Inventory, used as a pre-test and post-test, and student self-evaluations were used to measure changes in self-actualization. Pre-test and post-test means were tested by t-test for significance at the .05 level. Changes significant at the .01 level occurred in the Inner-directedness scale, the Feeling Reactivity scale, the Acceptance of Aggression scale, and the Capacity for Intimate Contact scale. A change significant at the .05 level occurred for the Time Competence scale. Student self-evaluations indicated that the course had a positive impact upon their self-actualization.

Indications of changes in attitude toward verbal and written communication were based on various forms of student self-reporting: a paper written at the beginning of the class listing writing difficulties, an attitudinal survey, and student self-evaluations. Indications were that students found written communication less disagreeable and less difficult at the end of the term, and were more willing to communicate orally.

The Composition Rating Sheet, developed by the writer, was used to determine changes in student writing. The CRS was used to evaluate a Diagnostic and a Final Essay. Both were evaluated by the writer, by another student, and by the instructor. The Final Essay was also evaluated by a Panel of English teachers. Comparison of the Diagnostic and the Final Essay by both methods of evaluation indicated that student writing had improved. Also, a high correlation was found to exist between the ratings done by the student writer, another student, and the instructor, and those done by the panel of English teachers. Student self-evaluations also indicated that students felt their writing skills had improved.

The findings indicated that the course had a positive impact on the self-actualization of students, both as demonstrated by the POI and in students' own perceptions. Student attitudes toward verbal and written communication improved. There were also positive changes in student writing and in student perceptions of their writing. Indications are that the confluent model for teaching English Composition is viable and appropriate.

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Chapter One

INTRODUCTION

The Nature of The Problem

To be an English teacher today, regardless of the level at which one teaches, is perhaps to be in a predicament rather than in a profession, as the Commission on English wryly observed (1965). English teachers are confused, uncertain, and even apprehensive about the value and effectiveness of what they are doing in their classes, and, indeed, whether they are doing any good at all.

A community college English teacher, teaching a course in freshman composition, is confronted with a multitude of problems. It is almost a certainty that the vast majority of students in composition classes have under-developed skills in using the language in either written or oral form. The range of ability levels will be wide, with students facile in the use of language forming a distinct minority.

An additional problem faced by the English teacher is that most of the students in the class have learned not to like English. For many of them the English classroom has been a scene of repeated failures. Most would report that they would not take a course in freshman composition if it were not required. Communication, especially in writing, is a difficult and frustrating experience, one that they would prefer to avoid.

Most of these students have taken from nine to twelve years of English and can see little value in their previous experience with English and even less value in taking more English courses. Benson (1976) recently

surveyed students in an aviation program at Miami-Dade Community College. Most reported that English was one of the three least valuable courses they had taken during their tenure at the college.

Although Benson's study was conducted at Miami-Dade, this attitude on the part of students is not specific to Miami-Dade. Any teacher of freshman composition, especially in an open-door urban community college, is more than likely faced with a similar, if not identical problem: a classroom of students who are largely deficient in language skills and who have, for a variety of reasons, negative attitudes about being in a required English composition class.

The Need For The Study

The teaching of English has in the past focused strongly on the cognitive area, and even more strongly on mechanical correctness. Sloan (1977) reports an experiment wherein he gave freshmen short passages to evaluate on a scale of 1 - 10. Almost without exception, the students tended to evaluate the excellence of the writing samples they judged on the basis of technical errors and tended to ignore the content. Hawley, Simon, and Britton (1973:17) comment,

> . . .the authors. . .do not consider mechanics and style irrelevant to composition. However, we do feel that these aspects of writing usually receive disproportionate attention . . .Style and mechanics seem too often to be regarded as ends in themselves, instead of as means to an end--effective communication.

Fullerton (1977) facetiously suggests abandonment of the attempt to teach students how to put words and phrases together in sentences. He suggests that we teach the use of "prefabricated sentences" instead. Ken Macrorie (1976:1-2) suggests satirically that English teachers get exactly what they deserve in the dead and artificial "Engfish" they teach students to write--and then complain about:

> Most English teachers have been trained to correct students' writing, not to read it; so they put down those bloody correction marks in the margins. When the students see them, they think they mean the teacher doesn't care what students write, only how they punctuate and spell. So they give him Engfish. He calls the assignments by their traditional name--themes. The students know theme writers seldom put down anything that counts for them. No one outside school ever writes anything called themes. Apparently they are teacher's exercises, not really a kind of communication.

He continues (3-4):

> Students thoroughly trained in Engfish are hard put to find their natural voices in the classroom. They have left them out in the hall. . .
>
> They spent too many hours in school mastering Engfish and reading cues from teacher and textbook that suggested it is the official language of the school.

Humorous though Macrorie's comments are, they make a telling point. It is the focus of English teaching upon cognition and correctness that has produced meaningless writing that says little and bores everyone, including the writer. No wonder students dislike writing classes.

Hawley, Simon, and Britton (1973) note that student writing is usually done in a negative atmosphere, emphasizing correctness, which constricts and paralyzes students. Our emphasis on content, output, achievement, and competition has skewed the educational process. Heath's biting comments are well deserved (1971:60):

> The development of healthy, educable, and mature children should be our goal. Academic excellence is one component of human excellence but the test of our academic programs should never be just the amount of information ingested or class results as measured against national norms.

Numerous educators are beginning to write about the importance--and the significance--of creating a positive and nourishing environment for learning and of legitimizing the subjective or affective aspects of the learning process. Heath (1971) and Holtzman (1976) both comment on the

cultural changes that are taking place. Heath notes the boredom, alienation, and passive orientation toward life of many of today's students. Holtzman comments on the spiritual hunger, emphasis on sensory experience, and longing for personalization and self-enhancement he has observed in students.

Carl Rogers (1969) has written extensively both on the need to intergrate the cognitive and affective areas in the educational process and on the positive results he feels can accrue from such integration. He, as well as others (Litsey, 1969; Stanford, 1973; Hawley, Simon, and Britton, 1973; Roark, 1976) discuss the uses and the value of human relations training, and small group and encounter group methods in education. Numerous studies (Heath, 1971; Stanford, 1973; Lombard, 1975; Goodman, 1975; Costa, 1977) can be cited which demonstrate that in a humanistic environment in which the affective area is legitimized, or even stressed, both affective and cognitive learnings are higher. Costa (1977) makes an interesting comment:

> A further indication of the poor status of affective evaluation is that we often feel compelled to justify the effects of humanistic conditions by measuring higher attainment in such cognitive areas as reading and math rather than simply valuing affective conditions for their own sake (p. 262).

Goodman's study is of particular interest, as it concerns writing classes. She postulated a connection between learners' self concept and their ability to communicate. Experimenting with a climate of acceptance and positive feedback on communicative efforts, she found that students improved both in their self-concept of the ability to communicate, as well as in their actual ability.

Costa (1977:262) reports the prevailing view of what education is: "Education is still perceived largely as an intellectual endeavor. Instruction is conducted mainly in a verbal/cognitive manner." George Leonard (1968:127) says what it should be:

> One of the first tasks of education, then, is to return man to himself; to encourage rather than stifle awareness; to educate the emotions, the senses, the so-called autonomic systems; to help people become truly responsive and therefore truly responsible.

The Purpose of The Study

The purpose of this study was to address the problems described in this Introduction first, by creating an experimental course for Freshman English Composition (English 120) which was holistic and confluent in that it synthesized the cognitive and affective areas by incorporating Gestalt Therapy techniques into the teaching of writing skills; second, by implementing this course in an actual classroom situation; and third, by developing a procedure for evaluating such an experimental course.

The study includes a product, consisting of a rationale, goals and objectives, and a series of learning activities and exercises designed to meet the goals and objectives. Necessary background material which was covered in a lecture format is included, as are instructions for implementing the activities and facilitating the exercises.

The process developed to evaluate the effectiveness of the product is described in detail in Chapter 3.

Specifically, the study addressed the following questions:

1. What effect, if any, will the experimental course have on students' self-actualization on selected scales of the Personality Orientation Inventory (POI)?
2. What effect, if any, will the experimental course have on students' attitudes toward verbal and written communication?

3. Will there be changes in the focus and clarity of student writing?

4. Will there be changes in the use of detail in student writing?

5. Will there be changes in the development of student writing?

Definition of Terms

For the convenience of the reader, the following definitions of terms basic to this study are presented. The terms are defined here in order that the reader may have a clear understanding of frequently-used terminology used in subsequent sections of the Major Applied Research Project.

Composition Rating Sheet The CRS is a series of yes/no questions oriented toward getting students to direct attention to focus and clarity, development, use of detail, understandability, unity, amount of interest, and other aspects of writing considered particularly important for this study. "Yes" answers are desirable responses on the sheet; "no" answers are not.

Detail For purposes of this study, detail is defined thus: in composition, each main point in a paper should be supported with concrete, substantial, and consistently relevant detail in the form of examples, anecdotes, facts, reasons, argument, etc. In other words, the writer gives the reader some reason for accepting or believing the point being discussed.

Development For purposes of this study development is defined thus: each main point in the paper or paragraph is discussed long enough to show clearly what is meant.

Focus and Clarity For purposes of this study, focus and clarity are defined thus: a paper or paragraph ought to have one significant

central purpose, point, or idea, clearly stated, to the explication of which the paper or paragraph is devoted. The writer should be able to answer this question: "What impression, in one sentence, do you want to leave with the reader?"

Gestalt Techniques For purposes of this study, these are defined as techniques or strategies used in Gestalt Theraphy, or which have a direct origin in Gestalt theory.

Gestalt Therapy For purposes of this study, Gestalt Therapy is defined as a body of theory and a therapeutic approach developed and practised by Dr. Frederich Perls and later by other therapists. Gestalt Therapy has the following characteristics (Perls, 1969, 1973; Phillips, 1976; Resnick, 1974): it focuses on process; on the on-going situation in the here and now; on the experience of the entire organism; on awareness of what one is doing, how one is doing it, and what one is getting out of it; on the acceptance of responsibility for behavior; and on the development and use of the tool of awareness.

Personality Orientation Inventory The Personality Orientation Inventory (POI) is a self-reporting paper and pencil inventory that measures values and behaviors seen to be important in the development of self-actualization (Shostrum, 1966).

Self-actualization The self actualizing person, as defined by Maslow, Rogers, and Shostrum, is considered to be a person who is more fully functioning, living a more enriched life, and is developing his/her unique capabilities and potentialities with less emotional turmoil and fewer inhibitions than the average person (Shostrum, 1966). For purposes of this study, self-actualization is measured by the twelve scales of the Personality Orientation Inventory (POI), which are:

1. Time competent: ability to live in the present*
2. Inner directed: independent, guided by internal motivations rather than external influences*
3. Self-actualizing value: holds values of self-actualizing persons--"I live in terms of my wants, likes, dislikes, and values."*
4. Existentiality: flexibility in application of values*
5. Feeling reactivity: sensitivity to one's own needs and feelings*
6. Spontaniety: ability to express feelings in spontaneous action
7. Self-regard: ability to like oneself because of one's strength as a person
8. Self-acceptance: ability to accept oneself in spite of weaknesses or deficiencies*
9. Nature of man, constructive: sees man as essentially good
10. Synergy: ability to see opposites of life as meaningfully related
11. Acceptance of aggression: ability to accept anger or aggression in one's self as natural
12. Capacity for intimate contact: ability to develop meaningful, contactful relationships with other persons

*Those items marked with an asterisk are considered to be of particular interest for this study.

Organization of The Study

Chapter 1 states the nature of the problem dealt with in this study, discusses the need for the study, describes the purpose of the study, and provides definitions of relevant terms.

Chapter 2 reviews relevant literature in the following four areas: English Composition: the Current Context; Teaching English Composition: Divergent Views; Consideration of the Affective Area; and Confluent Education and Gestalt Therapy.

Chapter 3 describes and discusses the design and procedures utilized in this study.

Chapter 4 analyzes the data generated by the study.

Chapter 5 discusses the implications of the study and offers the writer's recommendations based on the findings of the study.

Chapter 2

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Relevant literature pertaining to English Composition and English instruction will be reviewed in the following categories:

1. English Composition: The Current Context
2. Teaching English Composition: Divergent Views
3. Consideration of The Affective Area
4. Confluent Education and Gestalt Therapy

English Composition: The Current Context

Liberal arts education in general and English instruction in particular are currently under fire. National hue and cry about what is, in fact, being taught in English classes, particularly those labeled "English Composition," reached a peak with the recent publication of an article by Newsweek entitled "Why Johnny Can't Write" (December 8, 1975:74). The article cited falling SAT scores and globally charged the U. S. educational system with "Willy-nilly. . .spawning a generation of semi-literates." Much, if not all of the blame has come to rest squarely on the shoulders of English teachers at all levels of education. One immediately apparent result of the controversy has been a full-blown "back to the basics" movement which has further divided an already divided profession.

Yet those involved in the teaching of English had already raised questions. Franza (1970) says English is dead--killed by rock music, television, and Age of Aquarius romanticism. Beaven (1970) recommends the dissolution of English courses as they now exist and the incorporation

of skills traditionally taught by English Teachers into other areas, such as social science; the establishment of writing labs to handle problems; and the promotion of other forms of self-expression. In "Why Johnny Can't Write: An Indictment of 'English' Teaching" Jane Raymond Walpole (1974) criticizes the emphasis that most English teachers place on literature in their courses. She questions the fact that English teachers are selected to teach writing, a job for which most of them are no more qualified than other members of the faculty, since their preparatory work rarely, if ever, includes a course in teaching composition. Too, most English teachers, she declares, enter their profession not out of a desire to work with the language, but out of a love of literature. Walpole advocates that English classes study the language--the writing of a sentence and a paragraph. Her article has implications for teacher education and for the reorganization of English departments.

Lyons (1976) also mentions the literary orientation of most college English professors. He discusses at length the prejudice among faculty at most four-year institutions against teaching Freshman Composition <u>at all</u>. He mentions Community Colleges as almost the only exception to the general rule that students in Freshman Composition will rarely, if ever, see a full-time member of the English faculty. Most composition courses at four-year institutions are taught by graduate assistants who receive little, if any training, support, or supervision in teaching the composition courses for which they are responsible. Milton (1973) cites research to support the prevalence of this situation.

The "Basics Backlash," as it is called in one article, has obviously received considerable attention within the profession. Stephen Judy,

editor of the English Journal, collaborated with Robert F. Hogan, Executive Secretary of the National Council of Teachers of English, in an article entitled "The 'Back to Basics' Controversy." The article questions the basis of the national scare and suggests factors that might have affected the lowered SAT scores. The two also raise some interesting questions. Among them are: "Is 'Back to Basics' a synonym for budget cutting?" and "What are the Basics?" Also offered are some specific suggestions for ameliorating the writing situation at all levels of education. They point out, among other things, that most writing from the junior high school level upwards is focused on a single form of expository writing--the essay. They suggest strongly that the parameters of what is considered literacy in writing be broadened to include more than just the expository essay (1976). On the same subject, the decline of the SAT scores, Judy notes in an editorial in the English Journal (1975:7) that ". . .fundamental courses often create linguistically insecure writers of academic gobbledegook."

Schillaci (1976:21) also compares the back to basics movement with economic retrenchment and blames the Nixon administration. He sees the movement back to the basics as an attack on all forms of innovative education and is particularly concerned about the effect on visual literacy and use of media. "We and our students are learners living in a media environment," he states (p. 21). "Because society. . .expresses and advances itself through its media, the study of media must be viewed as a basic. . .apprehended as a method, a process, an approach to the education of all peoples (p. 60)." He goes on to discuss lessons, such as value clarification, that may be learned from media.

Kuykendall (1975) sees the literacy crisis as more myth than reality. She fears, however, that poor instructors may use the crisis as an excuse to return to drill books and meaningless repetition.

Brett (1964) reviewed studies on composition and found no significant correlation between knowledge of grammar and ability in composition, between frequent writing practice and better writing, and between intensive evaluation and better writing. Milton (1973) cites the careful 1964 study made by Sutton and Allen, who found that five sections of English composition classes with five different approaches made significant gains in the objective pre- and post-test but exhibited no improvement in writing ability. Kitzhaber (1963) conducted a meticulous study at Dartmouth in which themes of freshman in the English composition course were compared with those of seniors who had taken the course previously. The seniors' themes contained from twice to ten times as many errors as did those of the freshmen. According to Milton (1973) this study raises serious questions about memory and transfer of learning, as well as the way in which much educational research is conducted.

Lois Arnold, in a provocative article entitled "Writer's Cramp and Eyestrain--Are They Paying Off?" (1964) also cites studies to show that increased frequency of writing does not imporve writing nor does increased intensity of evaluation. In a series of position papers, writers for SLATE (Support for Learning and Teaching of English) examine various aspects of the "back to basics" movement. Charles Suhor (1976) notes that the crisis has included a call for the study of grammar and usage for their own sake. He points out the difference between grammar and usage and notes that variances from standard usage are no longer believed to reflect degrees of intellectual ability, and indeed, that insistence

on standard English as the only "right" form may be a kind of linguistic imperialism. Sentence-combining is more effective than sentence-labeling in improving language performance according to research, states Suhor. He continues,

> Increasingly, English teachers are moving away from teaching labels and definitions and towards the things that make a difference in their students' lives: promoting fluency and richness of expression; reducing instances of cliches and jargon; creating an awareness of manipulative language in advertising and politics; and promoting logical exchange of ideas in open discussion.
>
> The impact of the new approaches to language instruction has not yet been felt. At this point, teachers are looking forward to the basics,. . .(p. 1)

Richard Adler reviews NCTE (National Council of Teachers of English) research on composition and summarizes the recommendations. Among them are a need for more research and analysis of data to determine exactly where the problem areas are, and with whom; widespread availability of remedial writing laboratories; reduction in the size of writing classes to allow writing teachers to assign writing, read it, discuss it, and constructively evaluate it; a move away from negative correction and prescription; and more instances of reading and feedback from peers (1976).

John Mellon (1975) in summarizing the results of the National Assessment notes that the level of skill in mechanics gives no cause for alarm, that the importance of motivation in the teaching or the assessment of writing cannot be overestimated, and that the selection and formulation of topics for writing is of paramount importance in teaching writing.

Stephen Dunning and Virginia Redd (1976:2) respond to the question, "What Are the "Basics" in English?" They cite research to show that

isolated teaching of skills cannot be justified and that it is useless to teach grammar and usage out of the context of composition. They define what is "basic" in English teaching thus:

> Authorities suggest that the real basics are language processes. A way to focus in on language processes is to use what we have learned about language acquisition and development to derive a set that can be applied to all human language activities. Three basic levels of language processes can be identified in ascending order:
>
> 1. Imitative processes related to basic literacy at the recognition and recall levels,
>
> 2. Organizing processes related to fluency in the use of basic language tools, and
>
> 3. Critical, creative, and evaluative processes involving originality and conscious choice of language alternatives,

Clearly the "back to basics" controversy will have a massive effect on present-day English curricula. One outcome may be, as Gene Lyons (1976) suggests, that English teachers, especially at senior institutions, will be held accountable for teaching, per se, and for teaching Freshman Composition courses as well. Perhaps the National Council of Teachers of English or some other august body will come out with a definition of what the basics really are, to which all or most English teachers can subscribe, so we can all get about the business of getting down to business. What seems more likely, however, is that the English teaching profession has before it a massive task.

There is a need, as noted by Milton (1973) for revamping some of the long-cherished beliefs about the nature of education and the ways in which educational research is conducted. Adler (1976) recommends further research in the area of English. Postman and Weingartner (1973:129) point out:

> The plain truth is that in spite of the statistical razzmatazz produced by some of our reputable schools of education, we know very little about the conditions under which different kinds of learning best take place.

Teaching English Composition: Divergent Views

In the early sixties a commission was formed under the auspices of the College Entrance Examination Board. The stated goal of the Commission on English (1965:1) was to ". . .propose standards of achievement for college preparatory students and to suggest ways of meeting them." One of the difficulties faced by the Commission was defining the subject they were investigating. Freedom and Discipline in English, the published report of the Commission, includes the following recommendation (1965:13): ". . .the scope of the English program be defined as the study of language, literature, and composition, written and oral, and that matters not clearly related to such study be excluded from it." In composition the report calls for the development of a high degree of skill in logical thought and the writing of exposition, with creative and other types of writing seen only as a means toward that end.

Though this report was highly influential in its effects on both secondary and college level English curricula, a basic truth about English teachers and English instruction was also stated in the Foreward to the report (1965:VII):

> Restlessness about the quality of English instruction has existed among teachers of English for decades. It may be true that thoughtful English teachers have always been and always will be dissatisfied with their performance,. . .

Review of literature written about the instruction of composition reveals a multitude of criticism, suggestions, and soul searching--some of it contradictory.

Fletcher (1964) criticizes composition teachers for stifling creativity by assigning topic sentences and stereotyped questions. O'Dea (1965) criticizes the teaching of composition by reading great literature, analyzing professionally written essays, revising other people's work, and analyzing grammar. Rogers (1967), however, encourages the study and imitation of prose. Thorpe (1968) suggests sentence completion as a basis for compositions. Her strategy closely resembles the more recent technique of sentence completion for value clarification.

Draper (1969) suggests teaching writing as a process of drawing ideas and feelings together around a controlling mood or tone. Neumeyer parodies that about which he complains in an article entitled, " A Gallery of Horrors, or, Morsels to Eschew, Followed by Advice for Those Who Have Ears to Hear (1975:62)." In it, he complains that the worst thing about kids' writing is that it is dull because they are surrounded by dull writing. He exhorts English teachers to do something to help students clarify their thinking, and concludes, ". . .to write well, you've got to have something you've got to say, and you've got to know what it is,. . ."

Phelan (1975) describes writing as "timid talking" and urges teachers to write along with their classes. Golub and Reising (1975) advocate using oral communication as a pre-writing activity. Kelly (1975) holds much the same view. He suggests teaching students to talk on paper and to view themselves and the teacher as resources for this activity. Hamalian (1970) encourages the teacher of composition to help each student find his own unique voice in writing, and then to use that voice to communicate personal experience. Clark (1975) also suggests that teachers validate each student's uniqueness and place emphasis on helping

the student find his own voice. Students should also be asked to begin evaluation of their written work by responding to the question: "What do you think is the best thing about this paper?" Beach (1975) suggests the use of a journal in composition classes to allow students to describe what is happening in their lives. He suggests that the journal should be on-going and not merely retrospective, filled with "diary type" entries.

Winterowd's (1975) approach is more conservative. He elaborates in somewhat confusing detail a semi-linguistic approach in which the topic is used to generate content and organization for the paper. Students would focus on a given topic with the question: "What can I say about this subject?" Dagher (1976) stresses the aspects of thinking that go into writing, with particular focus on thinking that precedes such writing. Kitzhaber (1963) suggested, as a result of his study, that more emphasis be placed on pre-writing and pre-thinking activities.

Other writers have suggested still other approaches to teaching writing, some of them novel. Weiner (1975a) suggests the use of non-written media as a prelude to written exercise. Remedial students particularly, he suggests, might profit from the composition of collages, tapes, and photo essays before they begin writing. Hillocks (1975) suggests several experiential exercises to increase students' sensory awareness and ability to use concrete language in writing.

Other approaches to the teaching of writing also suggest alternatives to the usual practice of having the teacher mark compositions. Shuman (1975) suggests letting teams of students work on the same paper, comment on rough drafts, and collaborate on revisions. He also suggests that students write the same paper for different audiences. Laguna (1973) conducted an experiment which utilized individualized learning and peer

evaluation of compositions. The experimental group, it was found, made significant gains in critical thinking, organization, and appropriateness of language. Diederich (1974) suggests that there is value to be gained from having students re-write and revise papers, but only if there is some kind of reward connected with it. He also suggests focusing positive comments on student writing, as well as the use of peer criticism and evaluation. Hardaway (1975) suggests that peer grading of students' themes offers them more opportunity for constructive criticism, as well as suggestions for improvement that are often easier to accept, coming from a peer than from the instructor.

It may be seen then, that English teachers seem to be in a constant process of self-evaluation and self criticism about their work. In 1963, Kitzhaber criticized the state of Freshman English composition as being as vague and disorganized in its aims as college English teachers had complained for years about secondary English education. More recently, there seems to be an attempt to clarify and focus upon some of the issues involved in teaching students writing.

Kitzhaber (1963) also complained that colleges needed to pay more attention to the area of Freshman English Composition, instead of regarding the teaching of it as a distastful chore to be relegated to the lower ranks of teachers and graduate students. Yeomans (1973) notes that the vast majoarity of research done in English pertains to reading. Milton (1973) comments acidly on the fact that educational research tends to focus its efforts in areas where measurement is easy.

Teaching English composition then, is an area which is regarded with distaste; is an area in which little research has been done, especially recently; is an area in which there is much soul-searching,

some experimentation, and much prescription; and is an area in which there is widespread and general disagreement about effective teaching strategies. It is also an area in which the primary emphasis and the major approach has tended to be cognitive, according to Yeomans (1973).

Consideration of the Affective Area

It is only lately that educators have become cognizant of, much less concerned about the separation of the cognitive and affective realms in education. Cross (1976:139) writes:

> After all the years spent in academic analyzing the fallacy of various forms of dualism, it is ironic that we should find ourselves practicing cognitive-affective dualism in education. We have created separate (and not quite equal) structures to handle a dualistic conception of education.

Weinstein and Fantini (1970:29) write:

> Our observations lead us to the conclusion that schools ignore the affective domain as content and instead assume that students will be motivated to learn an extrinsic body of content if enough pressure is placed upon them.

Ornstein (1972) calls for a de-emphasis on the rational, linear thinking characteristic of the left brain and development of the intuitive, subjective, non-linear thinking characteristic of the right brain.

George I. Brown notes that the schools have long concentrated on the purely cognitive (1971:11). He continues:

> The cold, hard, stubborn reality is that whenever one learns intellectually, there is an inseparable accompanying emotional dimension. The relationship between intellect and affect is indestructibly symbiotic.

Postman and Weingartner (1973:164) describe the humanistic educators as those who:

> . . .believe that helping children to be more human (as opposed, say, to being better spellers) is the main function of schooling. Moreover, they tend to believe that conventional schooling is so structured that it is virtually impossible for a student to learn how to relate authentically and sensitively to other people.

Yet students desire opportunities for experiences relating to the affective realm. The Carnegie Commission Survey of Faculty and Student Opinion (1973:14) indicates that undergraduate students place a high priority on items such as "Their 'emotional growth,' 'Learning to get along with people,' and 'Formation of values and goals,'" among others. These items, however, ranked highest. In a recent study done by Skellings and Tixier at Miami-Dade Community College (1975), students ranked "self awareness and self acceptance" as one of the five most important areas to be covered in English composition courses.

According to Weinstein and Fantini (1970:28):

> Concerns, wants interests, fears, anxieties, joys, and other emotions and reactions to the world contain the seeds of "motivation." Dealing with the child's inner concerns constitutes recognition of, and respect for, him. By validating his experiences and feelings, we tell the child, in essence, that he <u>does</u> know something. Probably this is the most important factor in linking relevant content with self-concept.

Unfortunately, this line of thinking has not been followed, for the most part, in education generally, and in English instruction particularly. Yoemans, after discussing recent innovations in English education, concludes (1973:113-114):

> Generally, subject matter has been viewed as the main business of English, though lately, there is more talk of the child and his concerns. But, for the most part, the great push has been to improve cognitive teaching and learning.

> . . .by and large, English Education has concerned itself with learning in the impersonal realm, and that, with a few exceptions, the interpersonal and intrapersonal realms have been neglected. This has led to the over-emphasis on cognitive learning discussed above, and also to the experience of dissatisfaction with "English" expressed by so many students, and even teachers, who have found no way to relate personally to this impersonal material.

This concern with cognitive teaching and learning and equal preoccupation with the writing of the expository essay may be instrumental in creating just the kind of situation which causes English teachers, especially writing teachers, to wring their hands in despair. The assignment of topics, no matter what the subject, to be dealt with primarily in the form of an expository essay, often creates for the student simply an abstract intellectual exercise, one in which he has no investment and no involvement. This lack of involvement often is demonstrated by the production of what Judy labels "academic gobbledegook."

Harold (1973:192) labels paper-writing as an abstract exercise. He comments:

> The phenomenon of paper-writing in general forces the writer to abstract himself both from his experience of life and from the actual classroom situation. It is, however, always and only his own personal relationship, both intellectual and emotional, with the literature that the student can communicate in a paper. But in discouraging reference to personal experience and the use of the first person pronoun, the implicit rules of the game discourage the student from making any thorough examination of his relationship to the literature. These rules encourage a prose of pseudo-objectivity.
>
> And instead of writing to all participants out of a desire to affect the course of things, he writes as an exercise to the teacher, who is not an audience at all in the normal sense, but a kind of cosmic auditor. He thus is abstracted from the conditions which usually impel and energize writing: being involved in a human situation which one wants to change and speaking to an audience of peers. Consequently, student writing is often stilted, limp, dry--painful to write and read.

Moore (1971:91) comments bitterly on the treatment of disadvantaged students, particularly in remedial classes, who face a never-ending round of drill book exercises, verbs to conjugate, friendly letters to write, and expository themes to compose. The Watts writing workshops conducted by himself and screenwriter Bud Shulberg

> . . .have shown that students can do some excellent writing, even though they know virtually nothing about the structure of the language, when they are motivated to concentrate on their ideas and feelings. When students are assigned to write about their experiences, they write with insight, with sharp attention to details, with rich colloquialism, and with stark. . .passion. . . .These students frequently have more experiences than do those who teach them.

Weiner (1975b) also suggests that the expository essay is not the place to begin with remedial students. He recommends beginning with a suggestion that students write about a memorable personal experience in a single narrative paragraph.

A few English instructors have begun to move away from concentration on a purely cognitive approach to teaching writing, many because they are finding that rational approaches are not effective. David Siff (1975:31-32) notes:

> For years, our English journals have been filled with such narratives, all of which point to the failure of the traditional approach to composition with its baggage of mechanical exercises in rational argument and to the need for a different approach, grounded more in the <u>prima materia</u> of the student's life.

The more personal approach has not produced better writing either, Siff continues, largely due to the assumption of composition teachers that thinking and writing or feeling and writing are always preceded by rational thought. Many so-called rational people, argues Siff, don't know what they think or feel. This is true, not because thinking or feeling doesn't take place at all, but ". . .it takes

place unconsciously, well out of range of the best stratagems of teachers of composition." He then describes a process of using students' dreams as a basis for composition.

Paull and Kligerman (1975) suggest journals, the creation of "happenings," meditation on various objects and other strategies to involve students in the personal experience of chaos, for example. They focus on "concreteness" and invention in writing. Mackie (1975) focuses on a process-oriented, student centered approach in advocating a personal growth model for teaching writing. Jacobs (1975) advocates the use of gestalt learning theory to help students learn to write by using existential phenomenology. His suggestions include the writing of interior monologues or dialogues with others, or the focusing upon an element in the environment and an exploration of its significance for the writer.

McCracken and Ashby would change the title of the traditional Freshman Composition course to "Creative Communication." They come to a radical conclusion about the course they intend to teach (1975:63-64):

> . . .writing is now no longer the center of the Freshman English classroom (emphasis theirs). . .Our first hypothesis is that when students are able to plug themselves into their own experiences the more articulate will be their questions, the more specific will be their responses and the broader will be their alternatives.

Glatthorn (1975:37) has a radical, by some standards, answer to an often-posed question:

> What is good English teaching? It is an authentic person--teaching English. Good English teaching does not have to do with a teacher-proof curriculum, an open classroom, or a learning package. It is the act of an authentic individual who is able to stay real in a very artificial world.

Education in general, English education in particular, and the teaching of writing specifically would benefit greatly with additional consideration of the affective realm. Caution, however, should be observed, so as to avoid the tendency to overstress the affective, as has been the tendency with anything that appeared as though it might work. Zuerling (1976:204) offers a fitting summative statement and cautionary word for English teachers:

> It would be a mistake merely to add Affect 101 to English 101 in the curriculum with corresponding faculty specialists. There is just as much an affective challenge present. . . when students confront the blank page when trying to write as there are cognitive tasks present. . .What's needed, in effect, is that teachers--both those who emphasize the analysis of content and those who stress the feeling of experience--become more aware of the total way in which their students, as well as they themselves, deal with the complex reality of schooling.

Confluent Education and Gestalt Therapy

Confluent education had its beginnings in 1967 when George Isaac Brown gathered together a group of educators interested in exploring the integration of the cognitive and affective realms and the interface between Gestalt Therapy and classroom instructional practices. Brown himself had had considerable experience with Fritz Perls and Gestalt Therapy and was convinced that there was great potential for the use of Gestalt methodologies and techniques in the classroom. This discussion will focus primarily upon benefits to be derived in student writing from the application of theory and techniques from Gestalt Therapy to writing.

Brown (1975b:3) defines confluent education thus:

> Simply stated, confluent education means combining thinking with feelings so that both benefit. Thinking is sometimes called the cognitive domain. Feelings and emotion fall in the affective domain. Confluent education seeks to

> integrate these two domains so they emerge to the extent that they both lose their boundaries and result in more holistic or "together" behavior on the part of the student. Instead of having emotions clash or conflict with intellectual activity, we try to have both work in a harmonious relationship for the ultimate welfare and productivity of the learner.

Yeomans (1973:4,6) defines confluent education as:

> . . .any method, practice, technique, or approach that fosters the integration of cognition and affect, of thought and feeling, in one learning experience for one or more learners.

He continues:

> . . .rather than a blending of elements we get an alignment such that neither element loses its identity as such, but becomes part of a higher level of organization (e. g. banks plus water make a river). In terms of mind (the banks) and feeling (the water) as these become aligned in a person, that which is seen as reasonable to do increasingly is also felt as desirable to do, what is thought about is loved and what loved, thought about, and this leads to a smooth flow of emotional energy through the forms of the mind. On the other hand, where there is little or no alignment, there is conflict between mind and feelings (the banks overflow or are empty, the water has no direction or is forced uphill) and much energy and effort in teaching and learning is misspent or simply wasted.

Perls (1973:125) has defined learning as ". . .to discover that something is possible. It's not just the taking in of some information." It would seem that much educational practice is predicated upon Perls' definition of what learning is <u>not</u>. Perls also states (1969:22):

> Intuition is the intelligence of the organism. Intelligence is the whole, and intellect is the whore of intelligence—the computer, the fitting game: If this is so, then this is so—all this figuring out by which people replace <u>seeing and hearing what's going on</u>. Because if you are busy with your computer, your energy goes into your thinking, and you don't see and hear any more.

Simkin (1975) discusses the difference between "experiencing" and "thinking about." Experiencing involves the total organism, sensing and feeling, as well as thinking about, usually in the form of judgments. Simply "thinking about" an experience restricts the degree to which one may be involved in it. Simkin explains:

> My primary psychotherapeutic task, as I see it, is to help the person I am working with accept himself. My patients say to me in effect, "I want to change how I am," or "I don't like myself when I act this way," or "I'm so stupid," and the like. Yet, they expect to change how they are, not by fully <u>experiencing</u> their behavior as discomfort, embarrassment, joy, humiliation, excitement, pleasure, shame, but by <u>judging</u> their behavior as "bad," "stupid," or "unacceptable," thus talking about rather than fully coming in contact with what they do and how they do it. And, paradoxically, these people will be the first to claim the organismic truism that "we learn from experience." They confuse "thinking about" with "experiencing."

Gestalt Therapy focuses on process; on the on-going situation in the here and now; on the experience of the entire organism; on awareness of what one is doing, how one is doing it, and what the payoffs are; on the acceptance of responsibility for behavior; and on the development and use of the tool of awareness. All of these concerns are viable for revitalizing the educational process and certainly valid for the teaching of English composition. It is not the purpose of the author to present a detailed discussion of the theory underlying Gestalt Therapy, but to discuss briefly how the development of certain skills taught by experience with Gestalt techniques would be of benefit to students in writing.

Shapiro (1975:113) notes that one of the essential features of confluent education is, "Awareness of <u>self</u> as a legitimate object of learning (for teacher and student) and <u>deliberate attention</u> directed

to this learning." Phillips (1976) notes that Gestalt Therapy and confluent education share the common gols of promoting the development of whole persons, integrated persons, responsible persons, and aware persons, among other goals.

Much of the philosophy of confluent education as well as many of the strategies suggested, then, come directly from Gestalt Therapy as developed and practiced by Fritz Perls. Chief among these is the development of awareness. According to Perls (1969:49,50,51):

> Awareness covers, so to speak, three layers or three zones: awareness of the self, awareness of the world, and awareness of what's between--the intermediate zone of fantasy that prevents a person from being in touch with either himself or the world.

He speaks thus of the aim of Gestalt Therapy:

> . . .the aim in therapy, the growth aim, is to lose more and more of your "mind" and come more to your senses. To be more and more in touch, to be in touch with yourself and in touch with the world, instead of only in touch with the fantasies, prejudices, apprehensions, and so on.

The technique used in Gestalt Therapy is ". . .to establish a continuum of awareness.

Perls also discusses the importance of awareness in communication (1969:44).

> Everything is grounded in awareness. Awareness is the only basis of knowledge, communication, and so on. In communication, you have to understand that you want to make the other person aware of something: . . .and in order to communicate, we have to make sure that we are senders, which means that the message which we send can be understood; and also to make sure that we are receivers--that we are willing to listen to the message from the other person.

One of the most valuable tools with which the educational process in general and English courses in particular can assist a student in developing and using, then, is the tool of awareness. As can be seen,

the development and use of awareness is fundamental to the process of communication.

This concept is pertinent to English courses, and particularly composition courses because English courses deal with the effective use of language and language is the means whereby awareness can be communicated. Yeomans (1973:12) defines it thus:

> . . .language and its use (speaking, listening, writing, reading, thinking) is a central, though not only, way of human knowing and communication, and that it exists for most of us as the most important tool for clarifying and communicating our experiences as human beings for ourselves and for others,. . .

As has been shown in aritcles cited earlier, one of the most common complaints made about student writing is that it lacks clarity and focus. This is probably true because of lack of awareness on the part of the writer, awareness in termsof the three zones defined by Perls. Development of awareness and practice in expressing awarenesses would produce specific and desirable coutcomes in student writing. Skills which can be developed in students through the use of techniques from Gestalt Therapy, and which would hopefully manifest themselves in student writing are:

1. Increased awareness of total being: body, gestures, thoughts, fantasies, feelings, etc.
2. The ability to focus upon, separate, and intensify awareness of
   a. Internal processes
   b. Perceptions of the human and natural environment
3. The ability to differentiate between thought, emotion, and fantasy
4. The ability to differentiate between observation and evaluation

5. The ability to explicate awarenesses clearly and specifically

English teachers also complain long and loudly about the dullness and superficiality of student writing. Students often express as one of their major difficulties in writing trouble in finding something to say. Both of these complaints point to one area: content of student essays. McCarthy (1975:245) points out that the traditional approach to teaching writing is essentially backwards. He continues:

> . . .learning to write, like learning to do anything else, needs to begin with immediate experience in the learner. By starting with the self and moving outward, by starting with an awakening of his own perceptions, the student can use language to articulate his experiences of more and more of the world.

Experience as used here should mean experience as earlier defined by Simkin: total organismic experience.

Fundamental to this concept of experience is the idea of holism, basic to both Gestalt Therapy and confluent education. As Perls (1973:8) says: "One of the most observable facts about a man is that he is a unified organism." Resnick (1974:112) elaborates on this theme:

> Gestalt therapy is holistic: the mind <u>is</u> the body and the body <u>is</u> the mind. The human being is a gestalt, a unified organism, and his or her mental and physical activities are manifestations of the same thing, his or her total existence.
>
> Gestalt therapy, then, is a process of self-discovery whereby an individual becomes more self-aware and learns to take responsibility for his life by paying attention to himself as a whole person,. . .developing the various senses, particularly the intuitive ones. In order to be more tuned in to the wisdom of the organism.

Almost exactly identical to the idea of taking responsibility for one's own life is the concept discussed by Roueche and Mink (1976:20-21), who speak in terms of "locus of control." Briefly, locus of control

refers to the degree to which an individual feels he/she is able to master the environment, manage payoffs. In other words, it is the amount of correlation which an individual sees between his/her behavior and its consequences in the outside world. The importance of locus of control, according to Roueche and Mink, cannot be overestimated in the educational process:

> In a real sense, locus of control promises more potential for targeting remedial action with students than any other single learning variable. Locus of control is clearly one dimension of the philosophical struggle between fatalism and free will. Students who feel powerless to change the direction of their lives are unlikely to try.

Focusing the attention of the learner on, directing his/her attention to, enchancing his/her awareness of, validating his/her experience of, and allowing, even encouraging the learner to write about various aspects of his/her behavior will discontinue the long-established educational practice of forcing the students to separate head from body and from the rest of his/her experience of the world. As can also be seen, this practice has evidently contributed largely to problems in teaching students to write.

Student investment in both the process and the content of their writing will increase when they are allowed to articulate their own awarenesses and experience of the world. This increased investment, coupled with the necessity for communicating their experiences clearly to another person should produce resultant increases in the development, concreteness, and specificity of students' writing.

Focusing awareness upon the processes by which students produce many of their experiences, feelings, head trips, fantasies, and thoughts will also help them to develop the ability to accept responsibility for

their part in the learning process. The ability to accept responsibility for oneself is also liberating; alternatives are increased. Perls (1973:78) defines responsibility thus: ". . .responsibility is really response-ability, the ability to choose one's reactions."

Gestalt Therapy, as mentioned earlier, focuses on three key questions concerning behavior, always in the here and now: "What am I doing? How am I doing it? What am I getting out of it?" A shorthand term for the concept involved in the last of those three questions is "payoff." Helping students to understand how they, by producing behaviors and feelings, also produce the payoffs for those behaviors and feelings, can then give them insight into possibilities for alternatives. Thus, they may begin to see that they can also produce for themselves alternatives to those payoffs which they experience as negative.

Chapter 3

DESIGN METHODOLOGY

The focus of this study was the development of an experimental model for teaching Freshman English Composition (English 120) which synthesized the cognitive and affective domains by incorporating Gestalt Therapy techniques into the teaching of writing skills. The course was implemented in an actual classroom situation. A procedure for evaluating such an experimental course was also developed.

Product Development

The inspiration for the development of the product came from the writer's experience with Gestalt Therapy, both as a patient and as the therapist. The writer became aware of the fact that Gestalt Therapy promotes and encourages certain skills and behaviors which would also be desirable in writing. In the course of therapy, the client is constantly encouraged to focus upon and be aware of the experience of the total organism, his/her physical and emotional experience as well as the head messages. Specificity and clarity of communication are constantly reinforced, as is the acceptance of responsibility for one's own behavior and its outcomes.

Specifically, one of the major purposes of the product is to assist students in developing some of the skills that may be achieved with the use of Gestalt techniques. These are:

1. The ability to focus upon, separate, and increase awareness of
   a. Internal processes

b. Perceptions of the environment

2. The ability to differentiate between observation and evaluation

3. The ability to differentiate between thought, emotion, and fantasy

4. The ability to explicate (make the implicit explicit) in a specific fashion

5. The ability to recognize and accept responsibility for personal patterns of thinking, feeling, and acting (style)

The product (which appears in its entirety in the Appendix) includes a course package with rationale, goals, and objectives, and a series of learning activities and exercises designed to meet the objectives. Detailed instructions for implementing the learning activities and facilitating the exercises, including necessary background material, are included. The purpose(s) of the learning activities and exercises and the desired outcomes, in terms of both awareness of behavior and writing are included in the instructions. One goal in the preparation of the product was to make the instructions clear enough that the learning activities and exercises could be used by someone who had not had training in Gestalt Therapy.

Most of the teaching exercises developed for the experimental course and included in the product were original or original combinations of Gestalt awareness exercises and techniques with writing assignments or strategies for teaching writing. Other exercises, or combinations of exercises were utilized as needed. Every effort was made to give proper credit in these cases.

The learning activities and exercises appear in the product in the order in which they were used in the experimental classes. This order could be varied, with a few exceptions, by a teacher who wanted to stress different aspects of writing in a different order.

The first series of exercises is oriented toward building a sense of group communication, trust, and openness. They were also designed to begin to build confidence in writing by giving students an experiential basis for content of writing. Exercises then focus upon the idea of awareness, as it is used in the context of Gestalt Therapy. Sensory awareness exercises of various types are used to encourage students to use concrete and specific detail in writing and also to sharpen sensory perception and sensory awareness.

One idea that is stressed throughout the exercises is awareness of how cognition or head can interfere with experience. The Top Dog/Under Dog Exercises are pure Gestalt in theory and implementation and help the students develop an awareness of this kind of interference and also of the fact that much of their lack of confidence in their ability to communicate orally or in writing may stem from Top Dog messages which have been internalized.

Organization of written material is not introduced until students have had experience in generating content to the extent that they have developed more confidence in their ability to do so easily and until they become somewhat convinced they have something to write that is worthwhile. Other types of writing, such as writing description, writing evaluation, and writing explanation are introduced later through experiential exercises. Basic to all the writing exercises in the product is that the student is not writing on abstract intellectual subjects chosen by the teacher, but is at all times writing from his/her own experience and from his/her developing awareness.

The product focuses upon self-actualization, changes in attitudes toward verbal and written communication, and changes in student writing

in the areas of focus and clarity, development, and use of detail. The writer was cognizant of the fact that there is more to a composition than focus and clarity, development, and use of detail. It was the professional judgment of the writer, however, that these are key areas in effective writing. The exercises in the product, then, focused upon teaching Gestalt skills to develop effectiveness in the areas singled out as being of particular importance for this study.

Grammar and mechanical aspects of writing were not the focus of special attention in this study, as research indicates that these areas are often stressed in writing to the detriment of other, more important aspects of the writing process. For much the same reason, no attempt was made to measure or deal with spelling ability. Nor was any attempt made to measure or deal with reading level, reading comprehension, or reading ability.

Product Evaluation: Major Issues

Information for evaluating the effectiveness of the product falls into three categories: changes in self-actualization, changes in attitudes toward verbal and written communication, and changes in student writing. A brief description of each of these categories follows.

Self-actualization. Determinations as to the effectiveness of the product in influencing changes in self-actualization were made using the Personality Orientation Inventory (POI). This instrument was developed by Shostrum and published in its present form in 1966.

> The POI consists of 150 two-choice comparative value and behavior judgments. The items are scored twice, first for two basic scales of personal orientation, inner directed support (127 items) and time competence (23 items) and second for ten subscales each of which measures a conceptually important element of self-actualization (Shostrum, 1966:5).

The POI was chosen for this study because it was standardized, easy to administer in a classroom setting, fairly uncomplicated for the subjects, and the items are non-threatening to examinees. Additionally, the instrument provided a comprehensive perspective on the dimension being considered (Self-Actualization), and reliability, validity, and norms for interpretation of results have been established (Shostrum, 1966). A brief description of the twelve POI scales follows in Table 1. Those scales considered to be of particular interest to this study are marked with the asterisk.

Table 1

Scoring Categories for the
Personal Orientation Inventory

Symbol	Description
T /T * I C	TIME RATIO Time Incompetence/Time Competence--measures degree to which one is "present oriented"
O/I *	SUPPORT RATIO Other/Inner--measures whether reactivity orientation is basically toward others or self
SAV *	SELF-ACTUALIZING VALUE Measures affirmation of a primary value of self-actualizing people
EX *	EXISTENTIALITY Measures ability to situationally or existentially react without rigid adherence to principles
Fr *	FEELING REACTIVITY Measures sensitivity to responsiveness to one's own needs and feelings
S	SPONTANIETY Measures freedom to react spontaneously or to be oneself
Sr *	SELF REGARD Measures affirmation of self because of worth or strength
Sa *	SELF ACCEPTANCE Measures affirmation or acceptance of self in spite of weaknesses or deficiencies
Nc	NATURE OF MAN Measures degree of the constructive view of the nature of man, masculinity, femininity
Sy	SYNERGY Measures ability to be synergistic, to transcend dichotomies

Table 1 (continued)

Symbol	Description
A	ACCEPTANCE OF AGGRESSION Measures ability to accept one's natural aggressiveness as opposed to defensiveness, denial, and repression of aggression
C	CAPACITY FOR INTIMATE CONTACT Measures ability to develop contactful, intimate relationships with other human beings, unencumbered by expectations and obligations

Changes in Attitude Toward Verbal and Written Communication. Determinations about changes in students' attitudes toward verbal and written communication resulting from the experimental course were made from students' self-reporting in the first diagnostic essay (the pre-test), an adaptation of the Goodman Communication Survey which was administered at the end of the course, and student self-evaluation at the end of the term.

Changes in Student Writing: Focus and Clarity of Writing, Development of Writing, and Use of Specific Detail in Writing. Focus and clarity of writing, development of writing, and use of specific detail in writing were selected as key areas for making determinations about changes in student writing which might have occurred as a result of the experimental course. Changes in these areas were indicated with the use of the Composition Rating Sheet which was used for self-rating, peer rating, and instructor rating of a paper written at the beginning of the term and one written at the end of the term. The paper written at the end of the term was also evaluated by a panel of English teachers using the Composition Rating Sheet. An additional consideration was student self-evaluation at the end of the term.

Product Evaluation: Research Questions

An analysis of the performance of students taught English composition with the experimental confluent approach, which synthesized the cognitive and affective areas by incorporating Gestalt Therapy techniques into the teaching of writing skills, focused on the factors previously outlined. Specifically, the evaluation of the product focused on answers to the following questions in the categories previously mentioned:

Changes in Self-Actualization

1. Will there be changes in self-actualization as measured by the Time Competence scale on the POI?

2. Will there be changes in self-actualization as measured by the Inner-directedness scale on the POI?

3. Will there be changes in self-actualization as measured by the Self-Actualizing Values scale on the POI?

4. Will there be changes in self-actualization as measured by the Feeling Reactivity scale on the POI?

5. Will there be changes in self-actualization as measured by the Self Acceptance scale on the POI?

Changes in Attitude Toward Verbal and Written Communication

6. Will there be changes in student attitudes toward verbal and written communication?

Changes in Student Writing

7. Will there be changes in the focus and clarity of student writing?

8. Will there be changes in the use of detail in student writing?

9. Will there be changes in the development of student writing?

Variables

Independent Variables. Instructional methodology: The instructional methodology utilized in developing and teaching this course was primarily a synthesis of Gestalt Therapy techniques with the teaching of writing skills. Emphasis was placed on writing as a process rather than an end in itself; self awareness and writing from the student's own awareness and experience of the world and him/herself; and the application to writing of skills drawn from Gestalt Therapy, such as use of correct ego language, clarity, specificity, emphasis on here and now, and awareness and acceptance of personal style.

The instructor and the instructor's background: The writer, who was also the instructor, has an unusual background in English and psychology. She has taught English composition, reading, and literature at almost every grade level from seventh grade through the college sophomore level, in both regular and remedial classes. Additionally, she has five years' experience and training in Gestalt Therapy, as well as other experiences in the area of psychology, such as Jungian psychology, role playing, encounter, meditation, and higher sensory awareness techniques.

Dependent Variables

1. The Personality Orientation Inventory (POI)
2. The Composition Rating Sheet
3. Students' attitudes toward communication, verbal and non-verbal
4. Student perceptions of self
5. Student acceptance of self
6. Student writing

The Research Setting

Location. This study was conducted at Miami-Dade Community College, North Campus. Miami-Dade is located in Miami, Florida, and is a large, urban, publicly supported two-year community college. It offers a variety of college preparatory, technical, and vocational programs. Since the college is an "Open Door" institution, the student population has a wide range of skills and abilities, interests, and backgrounds.

Population and Sample Selection. Population: The population consisted of students at Miami-Dade Community College, North Campus, who satisfied the first three credits of the General Education English requirement with English 120, English Composition, during the Fall Semester of the 1976-1977 academic year.

Sample: The sample consisted of two classes of English 120 students who registered for classes which met Monday, Wednesday, and Friday 12:00 to 1:00 p.m., and Monday, Wednesday, and Friday 1:00 to 2:00 p.m.

Procedures for Collecting Data

Students took the Personality Orientation Inventory (POI) as a pre-test and as a post test.

Students wrote two essays at the beginning of the term. Both were written in class during a regular fifty-minute class period. In the first essay, written on the first day of class, students were asked to discuss briefly their major difficulties in writing and to mention specific aspects of writing they would like to have covered in class. Data was pulled from these essays and was used to adapt the Goodman Communications Survey and create an instrument which would give an indication of changes in attitudes toward communication. The adapted instrument was administered at the end of the term.

For the second essay written at the beginning of the term, students were allowed to write on any subject of their choice and were asked to write at least one full page. This Diagnostic Essay was also written in class.

Students also wrote an essay in a class period at the end of the semester. This essay, too, was to be on a subject of the students' own choosing and was to be at least a page in length. Students were told this essay was to represent the best of their writing skills, and for purposes of this study is labeled the Final Essay. For this essay, as well as for the Diagnostic Essay, students were told in advance so that they might pre-plan, but were not allowed to bring notes or outlines. They were allowed to bring and use dictionaries.

Composition Rating Sheets were filled out to rate the Diagnostic Essay and the Final Essay by the writer, by another student, and by the instructor. A panel of three English instructors also rated the Final Essay, using the Composition Rating Sheet.

The last of the required compositions utilized for this study was a self-evaluation. In this composition, students were asked to evaluate themselves in terms of the goals and objectives of the course and their progress in reaching them. Students were also asked to evaluate the course and the facilitating and teaching of the instructor in an essay. They were given the choice of doing this anonymously or of incorporating this evaluation (of the class) into the final composition (self-evaluation).

A descriptive instrument designed to indicate student attitudes about verbal and written communication was constructed and administered at the end of the semester (as previously mentioned). Data for this instrument came from the first essay students wrote dealing with their writing difficulties, from the Goodman Communications Survey, and from the goals and objectives of the course.

Procedures for Treating Data

Self-Actualization. Pre-test and post test means for scales No. 1 (Time competence), No. 2 (Support ratio), No. 3 (Self-actualizing values), No. 5 (Feeling reactivity), No. 7 (Self regard), and No. 8 (Self acceptance) were examined for significance by t-test at the .05 significance level.

Comments relevant to this area were elicited from student self-evaluations and students' evaluations of the course and are summarized in Chapter 4.

Changes in Attitude Toward Verbal and Written Communication. The instrument constructed from the initial essay dealing with writing difficulties and from the Goodman Communications Survey is included in the Appendix. The purpose of the instrument was to indicate student attitudes about writing blocks, communication, and writing in general. Data resulting from the administering of this instrument are presented in the form of a table. The results are discussed in comparison with the summary of what students mentioned in the initial essay as their major difficulties in writing. Relevant comments from student self-evaluations and students' evaluations of the course are also summarized.

Changes in Student Writing: Focus and Clarity of Writing, Development of Writing, Use of Detail in Writing. The Composition Rating Sheet was constructed by the writer. The sheet consists of twenty "yes" and "no" questions dealing with focus and clarity of writing, development of writing, and use of specific detail in writing, as well as other aspects deemed important. "Yes" answers are desirable and "no" answers are not. One point was given for each "yes" answer, and points were totaled.

The totals from self-rating, peer rating, and instructor rating for each individual paper were averaged on the Diagnostic Essay and the Final Essay. The ratings of the Final Essay by the three members of the panel of English insturctors were also averaged. The results of these ratings are presented in tabular form. The averages were compared and the results are discussed in terms of percent of increase or percent of decrease.

The rating sheet and the results of the rating of compositions were summarized and is treated descriptively rather than statistically because the rating sheet was used as a teaching tool as well as an evaluation instrument.

Relevant comments were elicited from student self-evaluations and students' evaluations of the course and are summarized and discussed in this section of Chapter 4.

Evaluation By a Panel of Experts. At the suggestion of Dr. John Rouech, Major Advisor for this project, an additional step was taken in order to partially compensate for the lack of a control group in this study. A panel of national experts in the areas of English, humanistic education, psychology, and Gestalt Therapy were asked to evaluate the goals, objectives, and learning activities of the course. The purpose was to determine the effectiveness of the experimental approach in achieving its stated goals and to determine the extent to which the learning activities used in the classroom implementation of the product can be considered responsible for the cognitive and affective outcomes evidenced by the data resulting from the study. Accordingly, a questionnaire was constructed (which appears in the Appendix) and sent to the panel together with a copy of the product. Returned evaluation forms appear in the Appendix, and a discussion of the results appears in Chapter 4.

Limitations of the Study

The following limitations should be considered in interpreting the findings of this study:

1. A major limitation to this study is the lack of a control group. The major purpose of the Major Applied Research Project was the development and implementation of a product (an experimental model for English Composition) and of a procedure for evaluation. With this emphasis, it was decided not to employ a format design involving control groups and experimental groups. The use of such a format was considered inappropriate, as it would have placed the MARP author in the position

of attempting to teach a class using an approach about which she would obviously have been less enthusiastic than the approach used with the experimental group, a bias which obviously would have affected the control group. Too, it was considered that it would have been difficult to refrain from using in one class, a strategy which seemed to be working in another, resulting in bleeding effects between the two classes.

In keeping with the above, the writer decided against using classes taught by a colleague as a control group. There are departmental goals for English at Miami-Dade Community College, North Campus, but no departmental syllabus. The emphasis placed upon reaching these goals, the materials and strategies used are entirely at the discretion of the individual instructor, and the resulting variation in courses is so wide as to render impossible meaningful comparison.

Although steps were taken to correct for this limitation, generalizations resulting from this study must be made with care, as a result of this limitation.

2. The product was tested only at Miami-Dade Community College, North Campus, which will limit the generalizability of findings from the study.

3. The product was tested only on students at Miami-Dade Community College, North Campus, who were registered in English 120. No attempt was made to test the product on students in technical writing courses (APC 160). This again will limit the degree to which findings from the study may be generalized.

4. The population to be tested will not be a random sample, nor will it necessarily be a cross-section of the student population at Miami-Dade Community College, North Campus. The groups to be tested may or may

not be heterogeneous, as students self-select classes. Thus generalizations resulting from the study will be questionable.

5. Inventories, such as the POI, may measure self-perception of change in self-actualization and may not necessarily reflect behavioral change toward self-actualization. This must be kept in mind in generalizing from results of the use of such instruments.

6. The evaluation of the outcomes resulting from implementation of the MARP product in the classroom will be largely descriptive in design rather than experimental for the following reasons:

a. Much of the information upon which the evaluation is based will come from students' subjective self-reporting in the form of written self-evaluations and evaluations of the course.

b. Many of the desired learning out comes will occur in the area of student compositions.

c. Study of existing instruments, consultation with research experts, and consultation with colleagues discloses the fact that there is no suitable objective instrument for evaluating compositions.

d. The development, standardization, and validation of a statistically reliable objective instrument for evaluating compositions is beyond the scope of this Major Applied Research Project.

Basic Assumptions

The following are untested assumptions that were made in conjunction with the project.

1. Most students are not taking English 120 (first semester Freshman Composition) by preference; they have registered for the course because it is required.

2. Most students would not take English 120 if it were not required.
3. Most college Freshmen, or those taking English 120, have taken ten to twelve years of English, have been exposed to a variety of approaches to composition, have experienced success to varying degrees, and will have attitudes toward the course ranging from mildly interested, to resigned, to apathetic, to resentful.
4. The range of abilities will be wide and will tend to be below grade level, as is common for a class in a large community college in an urban setting, and one in which there is not ability-level placement and no tracking.
5. The researcher, who will also be the instructor, will make every effort not to bias the results of the study.

Chapter 4

PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA

The following is a presentation of the data resulting from the various procedures utilized in order to evaluate the effectiveness of the experimental course developed and implemented as a part of this project. Measures were taken to evaluate the course in terms of both cognitive and affective goals, as a major purpose of the project was to develop a course which synthesized cognitive and affective domains by incorporating Gestalt Therapy techniques into the teaching of writing skills.

A format previously established will be followed in the presentation and analysis of data, this for the convenience of the reader. Discussion of results will be divided into the following categories: Self-Actualization, Attitudes Toward Verbal and Written Communication, and Student Writing: Focus and Clarity of Writing, Development of Writing, and Use of Detail in Writing. Also for the convenience of the reader, Research Questions pertaining to each section will be repeated at the beginning of that section.

Self-Actualization

Research questions pertaining to this area were stated as follows:

1. Will there be changes in self-actualization as measured by the Time Competence scale on the POI?
2. Will there be changes in self-actualization as measured by the Inner-directedness scale on the POI?

3. Will there be changes in self-actualization as measured by the Self-actualizing scale on the POI?
4. Will there be changes in self-actualization as measured by the Feeling Reactivity scale on the POI?
5. Will there be changes in self-actualization as measured by the Self-acceptance scale on the POI?

The Personality Orientation inventory was administered at the beginning of the semester and again at the end of the semester. Pre-test and post-test means for all twelve scales of the POI were tested by t-test for significance at the .05 level of significance. (A summary of pre-test and post-test responses is presented in Table 2 and in scalor form in Figure 1.)

Scale No. 1, Time Competence; scale No. 2, Inner Directedness or Support Ratio; scale No. 3, Self-Actualizing Value; scale No. 5, Feeling Reactivity; and scale No. 8, Self-Acceptance, were singled out as having particular import for this study. Differences significant at the .01 level were found to have occurred for scale No. 2, Inner Directedness; scale No. 5, Feeling Reactivity; scale No. 11, Acceptance of Aggression; and scale No. 12, Capacity for Intimate Contact. A difference significant at the .05 level was found to have occurred for scale No. 1, Time Competence.

The following Research Questions were answered "yes" at the .05 level of confidence according to the results of the Personality Orientation Inventory:

1. Will there be changes in self-actualization as measured by the Time Competence scale on the POI?
2. Will there be changes in self-actualization as measured by the Inner-directedness scale on the POI?

Table 2

Summary of Personality Orientation Inventory

Pre-Test and Post-Test Responses

Variable		Mean	S. D.	T-Value
Time Competent	Pre	14.44	3.5	-1.92*
	Post	15.81	3.5	
Inner Directed	Pre	78.19	8.7	-2.62**
	Post	83.83	12.1	
Self-Actualizing Values	Pre	18.15	3.0	-1.38
	Post	19.04	3.3	
Existentiality	Pre	18.58	3.4	-1.65
	Post	19.98	4.8	
Feeling Reactivity	Pre	14.67	2.7	-2.80**
	Post	16.27	2.9	
Spontaniety	Pre	11.52	2.6	-1.71
	Post	12.40	2.4	
Self Regard	Pre	11.55	2.4	-0.56
	Post	11.75	2.7	
Self-Acceptance	Pre	14.48	3.5	-1.34
	Post	15.48	3.8	
Nature of Man, Constructive . .	Pre	10.54	1.9	-1.25
	Post	11.06	2.1	
Synergy	Pre	5.79	1.5	-0.87
	Post	6.06	1.6	
Acceptance of Aggression . . .	Pre	14.46	3.1	-2.48**
	Post	16.02	3.0	
Capacity for Intimate Contact .	Pre	16.56	3.1	-2.55**
	Post	18.31	3.6	

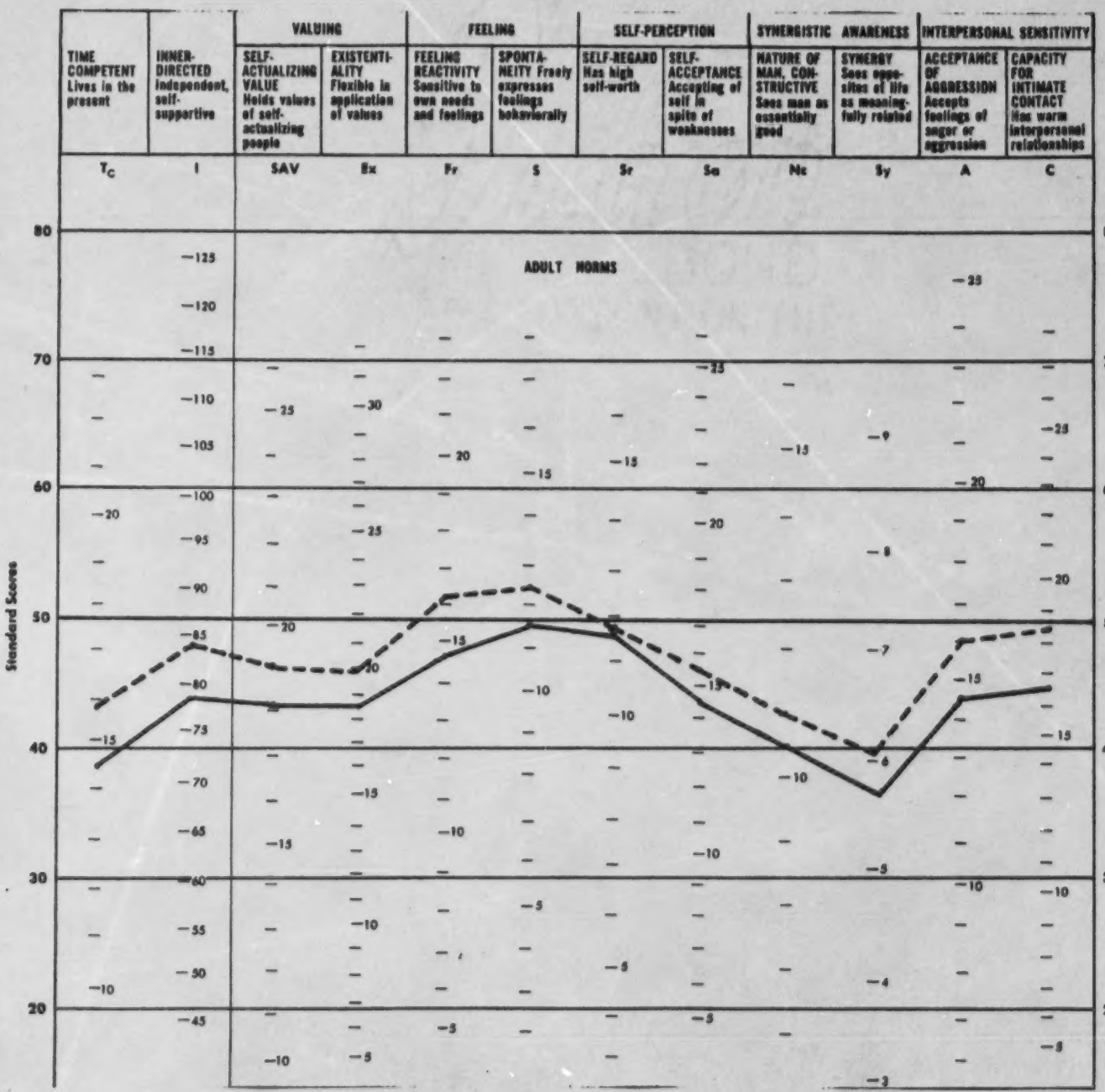
N = 48

* $p \leq .05$

** $p \leq .01$

Figure 1

Pre-Test and Post-Test Group Mean Responses to the Personality Orientation Inventory



Pre-Test _____

Post-Test - - - - - - - - - -

4. Will there be changes in self-actualization as measured by the Feeling Reactivity scale on the POI?

Also based on the results of the Personality Orientation Inventory, the following Research Questions were answered "no":

3. Will there be changes in self-actualization as measured by the Self-actualizing Values scale on the POI?

5. Will there be changes in self-actualization as measured by the Self-acceptance scale on the POI?

It should be noted, however, that significant differences at the .01 level occurred to two other scales upon which questions were not focused. Those were scale No. 11, Acceptance of Aggression, and scale No. 12, Capacity for Intimate Contact. It should also be noted that although there was no statistically significant difference at the .05 level of significance in the other seven scales, an increase occurred in all of the scales.

Students also made comments relevant to this area in self-evaluations and evaluations of the course written at the end of the semester. All students were required to evaluate themselves in writing at the end of the semester, and assess their progress in achieving the goals stated in the course outline. They were also asked to evaluate the course and the instructor, and were given a choice of doing this anonymously or of including the course evaluation in their self-evaluations. Responses relevant to this area are summarized in the following paragraphs.

Numerous students made comments in their self-evaluations that pertain to self-actualization. Fully half of the total group of students in both classes stated that they were more in touch with themselves or

more aware of their feelings, values, and needs as a result of taking the course. A few also commented that they felt the course focused more on psychology than on English, though many also stated that they thought the experience was valuable. Although the most frequently repeated comment was that students felt more in touch with themselves and their feelings, other commented that they thought more highly of themselves, were more able to accept themselves. Five students stated that they felt they were able to relate better to others as they understood themselves better. One student said that he had introduced his wife to some of the class exercises and that their relationship had improved as a result. Another student commented that he had found ways to combat his mother without her even being present.

Some of the students commented on specific exercises that were meaningful to them or that they felt had been helpful to them. Six or seven students specifically mentioned the Top Dog/Under Dog exercise as being particularly interesting, insightful, or helpful to them. A few of those students also mentioned that they used this exercise whenever they had a problem to work out. The meditation exercises were mentioned by a couple of the students as helping to put them in touch with their bodies. Two students noted that they had found taking the POI a valuable experience, as it had forced them to look at themselves in a different way. Surprisingly enough, none of the students expressed any objection to taking the POI, and were pleased that the results were made available to them at the end of the semester.

Specific comments relevant to the area of self-actualization were excerpted from student papers and are quoted as follows:

> . . .my feelings do change and I can have a hand in changing them. My feelings change simply by me becoming aware of them. When I acknowledge my feelings, they become more positive.
>
> . . .the teacher had a way of sucking me into her interests and making me figure out and untangle my thoughts and emotions for myself.
>
> That I could win some insight into myself and improve my awareness was something I didn't expect from a writing class, but I am very thankful for it.
>
> I have also received a benefit I did not expect that is the course helped me to become more aware of myself.

In conclusion, it may be said that the experimental course contributed significantly to certain aspects of students' self-actualization, as demonstrated by the result of the Personality Orientation Inventory. Student self-evaluations also indicated that students' perceptions of their self-actualization changed in a positive direction.

Attitudes Toward Verbal and Written Communication

The Research Question pertaining to this area was stated as follows: Will there be changes in attitudes toward verbal and written communication?

Data pertaining to this area is descriptive and was obtained from various forms of student self-reporting. Students were asked, on the first day of class, to write briefly about their major problems and difficulties in writing. A communications survey, developed by Dr. Alberta Goodman, was adapted to incorporate this information and was administered to students at the end of the semester. Students also made comments relevant to attitudes in their self-evaluations and their course evaluations written at the end of the semester.

Discussion of attitudes will be organized in the following manner. Major ideas extracted from the student papers dealing with writing difficulties will be summarized. Responses to the Communication Attitudes

Survey (the adaptation of the Goodman Communications Survey) will be summarized and discussed, as well as presented in tabular form. Relevant comments from student self-evaluations and course evaluations will also be presented.

Fully three-fourths of the total group of students in both classes stated in the initial paper that they found it hard to express themselves or found it difficult to get what was in their heads down on paper. At least one third of the total group flatly stated that they disliked writing because it was difficult for them or becuase they didn't think they wrote well. Fifteen students labeled their major difficulty as expressing themselves clearly, getting the point across, or organizing their ideas. Six students specifically mentioned spelling and/or vocabulary as a major difficulty. Five students listed finding something to say as one of their major problems, while approximately the same number said they needed practice in writing.

Mentioned in two or three student papers, but not appearing with great frequency were items such as supporting ideas with facts, finding the right word, and grammar. Appearing in only one or two student papers were items such as poor handwriting, introductions and conclusions, sentence structure, punctuation, and verbs. A couple of students noted that they were unable to write as fast as they thought. Others stated being repetitious and staying on the track were major difficulties.

Only three students stated specifically that the fact that English was not their native language was their major writing problem. At the other end of the spectrum, ten students said that they liked writing and found it easier to express their feelings in writing than to say them.

In adapting the Goodman Communications Survey, an attempt was made to direct questions toward those items which had appeared most frequently in these papers. Seven of the twenty-five questions deal specifically with writing or with feelings about writing. Thirteen questions deal with feelings about verbal and group communication. Four questions deal with communication in general, and one asks students how they feel about taking another English course.

The Communication Attitudes Survey, which was adapted from the Goodman Communications Survey with the permission of Dr. Alberta Goodman, appears in the Appendix. Items appear in the form of statements about various aspects of communication or writing. Students were given a choice of five responses ranging from extremely positive to extremely negative and instructed to select the response which came closest to describing how they felt about the item. The first response to each statement is the most positive and the fifth response the most negative.

A summary of the results appears in Table 3. The table includes an abbreviated version of each item and a distribution in percent of the responses to each of the five choices, from the most favorable to the least favorable. Each of the items dealing with writing will be discussed individually. Totals for the two most favorable responses and the two least favorable responses were used to determine the five items which received the most favorable response and the five items which received the least favorable response. These items will also be discussed individually.

For Item 2, "When given a writing assignment, I can think of something to say," 6 percent selected the most favorable response, "quite easily." The second most favorable response, "easily," was selected by 33 percent,

and the third response, "with some difficulty," was selected by 58 percent. Only 2 percent selected the fourth response, "with great difficulty," and none selected the fifth response, "it's extremely difficult, nearly impossible."

In response to Item 3, "I am able to think through and prepare an essay with which I am pleased," 27 percent selected the most favorable response, "most efficiently," and 52 percent the second most favorable, "fairly efficiently." The third response, "somewhat efficiently," was selected by 17 percent. "With difficulty," the fourth response, was selected by 4 percent, and the fifth response, "really not at all, and certainly not with pleasure," was not selected by any.

For Item 5, "Because I know I have something worthwhile to write, I desire to communicate in writing about my feelings and ideas," 31 percent selected the most favorable response, "very much." The second most favorable response, "pretty much," was selected by 33 percent, while 23 percent selected the third response, "somewhat." The fourth response, "very little," and the fifth response, "hardly at all," were selected by 6 percent and 4 percent, respectively.

To Item 6, "When I have written something, I am pleased with it," 19 percent responded "almost always," the most favorable response. The second most favorable response, "usually," was selected by 48 percent, and 27 percent responded "sometimes," the third response. The fourth response, "once in a while," was selected by 6 percent, and none picked the fifth response, "hardly ever."

For Item 7, "I feel proud of my ability to order and structure and develop my essays in a clear, logical manner," 10 percent selected the most favorable response, "as a strutting peacock." The second most

favorable response, "fairly proud," was chosen by 52 percent. The third response, "somewhat proud," was selected by 33 percent, while 2 percent chose the fourth response, "not very proud," and the fifth response, "I don't really trust myself to do this," respectively.

In response to Item 8, "When I have written something, I feel it communicates what I want to say," 44 percent selected the most favorable response, "almost always," and 48 percent selected the second most favorable response, "usually." "Sometimes," the third response, was chosen by 8 percent, while "seldom," the fourth response, and "hardly ever," the fifth response, were not chosen at all.

The final item dealing with writing, Item 9, received a more negative response. In response to, "I am eager to read my essays aloud in class or in groups, "very eager," the first response, was selected by 10 percent. The second most positive response, "fairly eager," was selected by 19 percent. The third response, "willing, but not eager," was selected by 40 percent. A total of 17 percent chose the fourth response, "have to be encouraged," while 15 percent selected the last response, "nope, too risky!"

It is interesting to note that of the five items which ranked highest by combination of the totals of the first and second responses, four deal directly and indirectly with self-confidence and two deal directly with confidence in ability to communicate. Item 8 ranked highest. In response to "When I have written something, I feel it communicates what I want to say," a total of 92 percent responded "almost always" and "usually." In the papers written at the beginning of the semester, approximately three-fourths of the students had indicated a lack of confidence in their writing or a feeling that it was hard for them to express themselves.

Item 13, which ranked fourth highest, also deals with confidence in the ability to communicate. In responding to "I have confidence in my ability to communicate," a total of 83 percent selected "very strong" and "fairly strong" as their answers.

The other high-ranking items deal indirectly with self-confidence in communication. Item 22, "When people disagree with me, I am able to listen to them and feel that their point of view is right for them, and my point of view is right for me," had a total of 87 percent of responders choosing "always" and "usually" as their answers. To Item 4, "I feel aware of and can readily accept the attitudes, feelings, needs, and goals of others, no matter how much these may differ from mine," a total of 84 percent responded "completely" and "pretty much." In response to Item 19, "When appropriate, I will take a stand on an issue and defend my position," a total of 83 percent chose "always" and "frequently."

With one exception, those items which ranked lowest by combination of the total of the last two responses are of interest to any community college instructor. All of these items, with one exception, fall into the category of sharing and/or risk-taking. Item 9, "I am eager to read my essays aloud in class or in groups," had a total of 32 percent responding "have to be encouraged" and "nope, too risky!" Next lowest in rank was Item 23, "I try to draw out quieter members and make them feel at ease." To this item, a total of 25 percent responded "rarely" and "I need drawing out!"

Items 20 and 21 tied as fourth lowest. In response to Item 20, "I feel free to risk sharing experiences and feelings meaningful to me with class or group members," a total of 17 percent selected "rarely"

and "have tremendous trouble." For Item 21, "After lengthy discussion and having defended my view point, I am willing to compromise or alter my point of view," a total of 17 percent responded "rarely" and "never."

The third lowest ranking item, Item 10, is particularly interesting in view of the problem stated as being basic to this study. In response to Item 10, "I look forward to taking another English course," a total of 23 percent responded "not very much" and "not at all, but I guess it's required." It should also be noted, that a number of students asked, while they were taking this instrument, if that question meant "the usual kind of English course" or one like the one they were presently taking. They were told that the course in which they were enrolled was considered an experimental course and was probably not representative of the "usual."

Students also made numerous comments revealing their attitudes toward verbal and written communication in their self-evaluations and course evaluations at the end of the semester. Approximately twenty-dive students made comments indicating increased confidence in their ability to express themselves to others. Some said they felt they could speak more easily or that they felt better able to make others understand their thoughts and ideas. Four or five students mentioned specifically that some of the small group exercises had helped them to deal with shyness.

Ten students commented favorably about the relaxed class atmosphere and said that they had been more willing to speak as a result. Ten to fifteen students noted that they had been pleasantly surprised by not being bored and that they had liked the exercises and assignments. Three,

conversely, did comment that they had found some of the activities boring. One student expressed apprehension lest she not be prepared for the next class, and commented that this one had been "not very scholastic."

Comments about the journal were both positive and negative. Three students said they did not like the journal and had resented keeping it. Nine students said that they had liked keeping a journal or felt that it had helped them. One student wrote, "Keeping a journal was not only good practice, but also a joy." Another student commented drily, "I never thought an English class could be interesting."

Other relevant comments excerpted from student papers are quoted as follows:

> What I liked most about this class was that Linda would tie in learning with enjoying and I didn't even realize it.
>
> During the course I occassionally (sic) wondered how this all fit in with English Comp. But now that the semester is ending and I look back, I realize that my words do come a lot easier and I really have learned how to express myself better, both verbally and on paper.
>
> When I started with this class, I wanted to learn what and how to write. I have learned, and it came to me so naturally, I didn't realize I was learning to actually write.
>
> The offer '. . .to write without worrying whether your feelings are right or wrong. . .' and the invitation to be myself let me enjoy this class more than any other writing class before.
>
> You draw the students' attention by the class experiments. From there you got me into what I was doing to such an extreme that the writing assignments following seemed to be something I looked forward to just to express what I felt.

In conclusion, it would seem that Research Question 6,

Will there be changes in attitudes toward verbal and written communication?

Table 3

Summary of Responses to Communication Attitudes Survey

Item (N = 48)	Most Favorable Response 1	2	3	4	Least Favorable Response 5
	(Distribution in Percent)				
1. Willing to express ideas and feelings verbally to others	23	46	25	2	4
2. Can think of something to say	6	33	58	2	0
3. Can think through and prepare an essay with which pleased	27	52	17	4	0
4. Aware of and can accept attitudes, feelings, needs, and goals of others, though different from own	21	63	15	0	2
5. Know I have something worthwhile to write--desire to communicate about feelings and ideas in writing	31	33	23	6	4
6. Pleased with what I write	19	48	27	6	0
7. Proud of ability to order and structure and develop essays in a clear, logical manner	10	52	33	2	2
8. Feel what I have written communicates what I want to say	44	48	8	0	0
9. Eager to read essay aloud in class or in groups	10	19	40	17	15
10. Look forward to taking another English course	23	23	31	10	13
11. Know I have something worthwhile to say--want to express feelings and ideas verbally	35	29	21	8	4
12. Feeling of competence in ability to use language	17	65	17	2	0
13. Have confidence in ability to communicate	27	56	13	4	0

Table 3 (continued)

Item (N = 48)	Most favorable Response 1	2	3	4	Least Favorable Response 5
	(Distribution in Percent)				
14. Want to attend and keep up with group efforts	38	35	23	4	0
15. Enjoy contributing effectively to group discussion	35	35	23	4	2
16. Will vocally support another's right to present unpopular view	29	27	31	13	0
17. Will risk giving and receiving feedback, when appropriate	19	31	35	15	0
18. Interested in learning and growing with the group	40	38	21	2	0
19. Will take a stand on an issue and defend position	50	33	15	2	0
20. Feel free to risk sharing meaningful feelings or experiences with class or group	15	33	33	17	2
21. Willing to compromise or alter view after discussion . . .	15	21	48	17	0
22. Able to listen to people who disagree and feel that their point of view is right for them, and mine is right for me	35	52	13	0	0
23. Try to draw out quieter members	17	29	27	21	4
24. Can communicate comfortably in a variety of ways	23	50	23	4	0
25. Definition of communication has expanded	35	42	21	0	0

may be answered with a qualified "yes." The results of the Communication Attitudes Survey seemed to indicate positive changes in attitudes toward verbal and written communication. Moreover, some of these changes seemed to be in areas mentioned by students in their first papers as being areas of particular difficulty. The Survey results also indicated areas of communication where these students still have strong reservations. Comments in student self-evaluations and course evaluations also indicated positive changes in attitudes toward verbal and written communication. What cannot be ascertained from this data is the degree to which attitudinal changes occurred.

Student Writing: Focus and Clarity of Writing, Use of Detail in Writing, Development of Writing

Research Questions pertaining to this area were stated as follows:

7. Will there be changes in the focus and clarity of student writing?
8. Will there be changes in the use of detail in student writing?
9. Will there be changes in the development of student writing?

These questions will be treated as a unit rather than separately due to the nature of the instrument involved.

The Composition Rating Sheet was constructed by the writer to be used as a measure for the writing done as part of this project. The CRS (which appears in the Appendix) consists of a series of twenty "yes" and "no" questions specifically focused upon focus and clarity, development, and use of detail as the major aspects of a paper. Other aspects of a paper, such as introductions, conclusions, interest, etc. are covered briefly. "Yes" answeres are desirable responses on the sheet;

"no" answers are not. One point is awarded for every "yes" answer checked on the sheet to a possible total of twenty.

Students wrote two papers during the semester which were rated on the Composition Rating Sheet. One essay was written in class at the beginning of the semester and was labeled the Diagnostic Essay. This essay was rated by the student writer, by another student, and by the instructor and the three totals were averaged together.

At the end of the semester, students wrote another essay in class, which was labeled Final Essay. This essay, too, was rated on the CRS by the student writer, by another student, and by the instructor. These totals were averaged. In addition, the Final Essay was rated on the CRS by a panel of three English instructors. This was labeled External or Panel Evaluation, and the ratings by the three instructors were also averaged. (Students had made up four-digit numbers for themselves, and were rated by number rather than by name.)

The rating each student received on the Diagnostic Essay was then compared to that received on the Final Essay and that received in the Panel Evaluation, and the amount of change noted in terms of increase or decrease of points from the original rating on the Diagnostic Essay. A detailed summary of the performance of each student appears in Table 4.

Discussion of the results of these ratings will be organized in the following manner. Class averages were computed for the ratings on the Diagnostic Essay, the Final Essay, and the Panel Evaluation. The ratings for the Diagnostic and the Final Essay will be discussed by individual class and for the combined classes. The Diagnostic Essay and

the Panel Evaluation will then be compared by individual class and for the combined classes. Results will be discussed in terms of averages of points moved and percent of improvement.

In the 12:00 class the average rating on the Diagnostic Essay was 15.18 points of a possible 20 points. The average rating on the Final Essay was 16.77 points of a possible 20 points. The average movement for this class was +1.59 points, or a 10.47 percent improvement. This figure represents 32.99 percent of the total improvement possible.

In the 1:00 class the average rating on the Diagnostic Essay was 14.32 points of a possible 20 points. The average rating on the Final Essay was 16.36 points of a possible 20 points. The average movement for this class was +2.04 points, or a 14.25 percent improvement. This figure represents 35.92 percent of the total improvement possible.

For the combined classes, the average rating on the Diagnostic Essay was 14.75 of a possible 20 points. The average rating on the Final Essay was 16.56 of a possible 20 points. The average movement was +1.81 points, or a 12.27 percent improvement. The figure represents 34.48 percent of the total improvement possible.

These results are then compared with the following External or Panel Evaluation results. In the 12:00 class the average rating on the Diagnostic Essay was 15.18 of a possible 20 points. The average Panel rating was 15.91 of a possible 20 points. The average movement for this class in this evalution was +0.73, or a 4.74 percent improvement. This figure represents 14.94 percent of the total improvement possible.

In the 1:00 class the average rating on the Diagnostic Essay was 14.32 points of a possible 20 points. The average Panel rating was

16.18 points of a possible 20 points. The average movement was +1.86 points, or a 12.99 percent improvement. This was 32.75 percent of the possible improvement.

For the combined classes the average rating on the Diagnostic Essay was 14.75 points of a possible 20 points. The average rating on the Panel Evaluation was 16.04 of a possible 20 points. The average movement for this class was +1.29 points, or 8.75 percent improvement. This was 24.57 percent of the total possible improvement.

It can be seen, then, that although the results of the Panel Evaluation were lower than the Internal Evaluations on the Final Essay, there was overall improvement in writing. It should also be noted, and can be seen in Table 4, that for a few students, the improvement was dramatic. Some students improved by as many as eight points on the Composition Rating Sheet. In all fairness, it must also be noted that some students decreased in points.

An additional finding concerns the Composition Rating Sheet. A Pearson Product-Moment Coefficient of Correlation was computed for pairs of scores on the Composition Rating Sheet. The pairings involved individual students rated by the Internal Rating process (student writer him/herself, student, and instructor) as compared to the External Panel Evaluation. A correlation was run for each class as well as for the combined group. Scatter diagrams for the two classes appear in Figure 2. The computed correlations were as follows:

1. The Pearson r for the 12:00 class computed to a value of .52--the value for significance at the .01 level is .537.
2. The Pearson r for the 1:00 class computed to a value of .87--the value for significance at the .01 level is .505.

3. The Pearson r for the combined classes computed to a value of .745--the value for significance at the .01 level is .372.

Many comments from student self-evaluations and evaluations of the course that pertain to the area of writing were discussed in the previous section on attitudes. Other comments pertinent to writing are summarized in the following paragraphs.

Four students commented that they disliked the class because it didn't seem like English. One student stated that it seemed more like a psychology class than an English class. One student said she felt let down because she didn't learn how to write effectively.

Twenty-five students commented that they liked the class or had found it valuable in terms of writing. Various aspects of writing were mentioned specifically by these students. Approximately ten of this group said that they felt their writing had improved because they could come to the point in their writing. Four others said they had improved in the ability to organize in writing. Others said they were able to express their ideas and feelings in writing, or that they could develop their ideas with detail better than they had been able to do previously.

Still other students said they felt their writing was clearer as a result of the course. Three students commented that writing about awareness had been helpful to them. One student noted that writing about awareness, ". . .does give the student something to write about." Another specifically mentioned the Composition Rating Sheet as having been helpful to her.

"I do feel that I've learned more about writing techniques. I find it a lot easier to express my feelings and experiences," commented

Table 4.1

Student Performance on Essays Rated with Composition Rating Sheet

12:00 Class

Student Number	Diag.	Final	Move-ment	Panel Evaluation			Panel Av.	Move-ment
4219	13	14	+1	18	19	18	18	+5
3236	16	16	--	16	18	15	16	--
4235	17	14	-3	12	14	13	13	-4
2155	14	17	+3	13	17	18	16	+2
3424	17	19	+2	18	19	18	18	+1
1858	16	19	+3	19	20	13	17	+1
1111	14	14	--	13	19	13	15	+1
1579	15	15	--	16	16	11	14	-1
2916	14	11	-3	16	19	12	16	+2
8888	16	19	+3	18	19	17	17	+1
7250	12	17	+5	14	19	15	16	+4
6057	14	17	+3	12	12	16	13	-1
2222	17	19	+2	20	20	17	19	+2
1976	15	16	+1	17	19	13	18	+3
8132	17	19	+2	15	20	15	17	--
0123	17	18	+1	15	17	11	14	-3
4444	15	18	+3	17	20	15	17	+2
3186	16	16	--	12	19	6	12	-4
0382	15	19	+4	16	20	17	18	+3
7426	14	15	+1	15	13	9	12	-2
0001	15	20	+5	20	20	14	18	+3
0444	15	17	+2	18	16	13	16	+2

Table 4.2

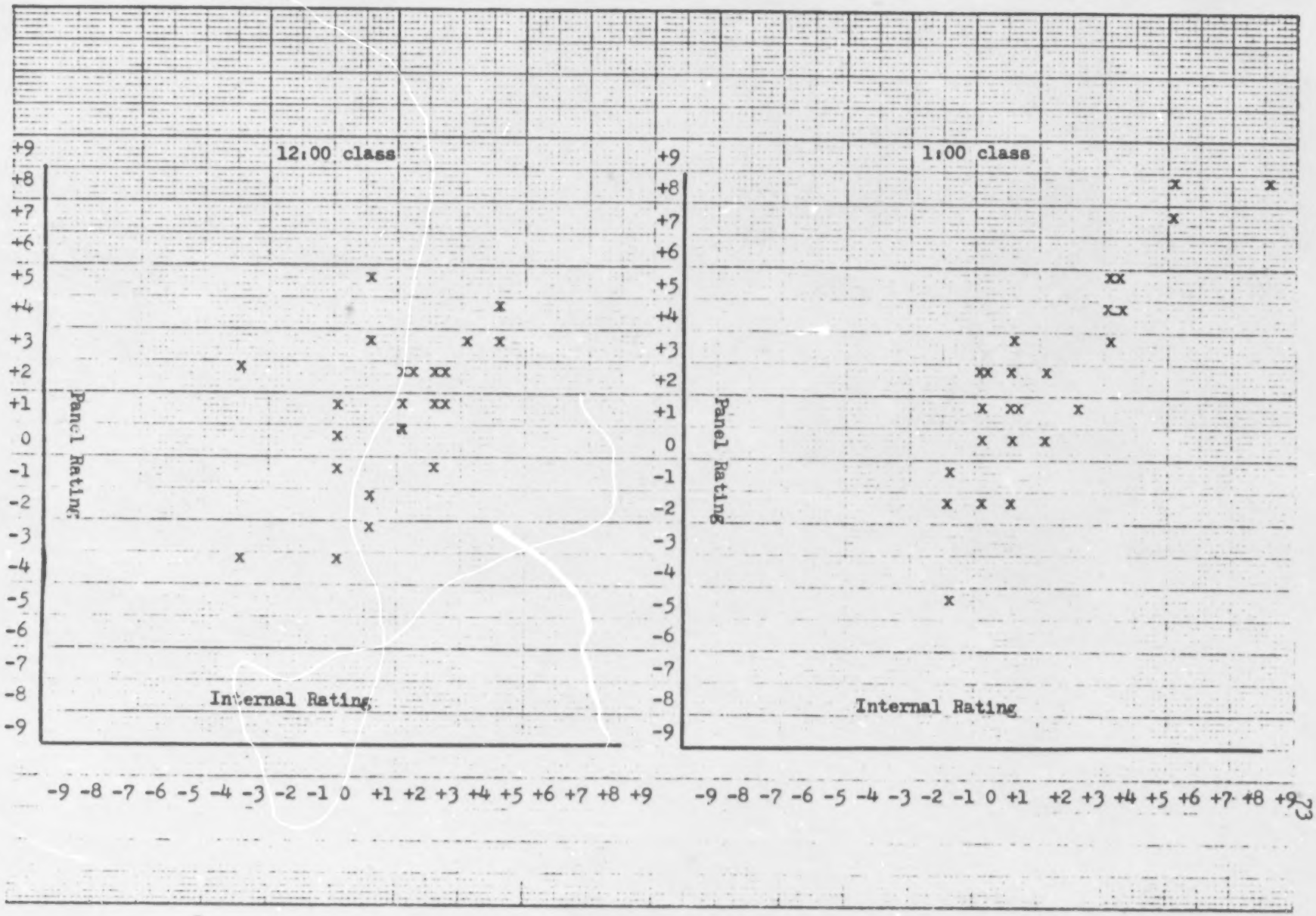
Student Performance on Essays Rated with Composition Rating Sheet

1:00 Class

Student Number	Diag.	Final	Move-ment	Panel Evaluation			Panel Av.	Move-ment
0000	14	13	-1	9	2	12	8	-5
2050	12	18	+6	18	20	18	19	+7
2468	16	18	+2	17	15	17	16	--
5315	14	18	+4	19	17	16	17	+3
3717	15	16	+1	15	20	9	15	--
2147	15	18	+3	17	19	12	16	+1
1958	15	15	--	18	19	15	17	+2
1234	13	12	-1	11	17	8	12	-1
4125	17	18	+1	18	19	9	15	-2
2468	12	16	+4	14	20	14	16	+4
2942	14	13	-1	12	15	8	12	-2
1923	11	17	+6	20	19	18	19	+8
0019	13	14	+1	1[illegible]	18	8	14	+1
5237	15	15	--	17	19	14	17	+2
720½	13	13	--	17	18	8	14	+1
4432	17	18	+1	20	18	16	18	+1
3333	14	18	+4	18	20	16	18	+4
5257	18	19	+1	20	20	19	20	+2
7525	9	18	+9	19	20	12	17	+8
1113	15	16	+1	20	20	13	18	+3
3338	12	16	+4	17	19	15	17	+5
7277	18	18	--	18	15	14	16	-2
2654	17	19	+2	20	20	16	19	+2
0700	14	18	+4	20	20	18	19	+5
9702	15	15	--	15	15	15	15	--

Figure 2

Scatter Diagrams of Comparisons for Individual Students Between Internal and Panel Ratings on CRS



one student. As many as five students made comments to the effect that they had learned something about composition without realizing it. Another student wrote, "No fair, Linda. You hooked us into writing about the one subject we couldn't resist--ourselves."

In conclusion, then, the results of the ratings on the Composition Rating Sheets indicated some improvement in writing. Comments from students on self-evaluations indicated that they felt they had improved in writing, also. For the convenience of the reader, Research Questions pertaining to the area of writing are re-stated as follows:

7. Will there be changes in the focus and clarity of student writing?
8. Will there be changes in the use of detail in student writing?
9. Will there be changes in the development of student writing?

Based on the data resulting from rating on the Composition Rating Sheets of a Diagnostic and a Final Essay by an Internal Process and an External Panel Evaluation, and based on information excerpted from student self-evaluations, these questions were answered "yes."

Evaluation by a Panel of Experts

At the suggestion of Dr. John Roueche, Major Advisor for this project, the product was also evaluated by a panel of experts. Experts were chosen from the areas of humanistic education, English, psychology, and Gestalt Therapy. Experts were suggested and/or approved by Dr. Roueche. The panel consisted of the following: Mrs. Mary Lou Conlin of Cuyahoga Community College; Dr. Ronald Connelly, Vice President of Academic Affairs, Greenville Technical College; Dr. Richard De Cosmo, Executive Vice President, Moraine Valley Community College; Ms. Flora de Hart of

the University of Texas Ph.D Junior College Leadership Program; Ms. Marty Fromm, Executive Director, Gestalt Institute of Miami; Dr. Gwen Hall, Dean of Counseling, El Centro College; Mrs. Margaret Holland, College of Education, University of South Florida; Dr. Richard Morgan of Western Piedmont College, and Dr. Max Painton of the Gestalt Institute of Phoenix.

Each expert was given a copy of the product and asked to fill out an evaluation form. The evaluation dealt with such questions as the appropriateness of the goals and objectives, the effectiveness of the integration of the cognitive and affective domains, and the effectiveness and appropriateness of the learning activities. Evaluators were also asked to comment upon the major strengths and weaknesses of the product.

Evaluations of the product were, overall, positive and favorable. Evaluators gave high ratings to the questions dealing with the appropriateness of the goals and objectives for community college students and for students in a Freshman Composition course. High ratings also indicated that the evaluators felt students satisfactorily completing the course would have achieved the necessary competencies to enter the next level course at their respective institutions. Panel members also responded positively to a question asking them if they could see the suitability of using Gestalt Therapy techniques in teaching composition, based on their review of the course materials.

Evaluators were most favorable about the confluence of the cognitive and affective domains and commented favorably upon the appeal of the course and the learning activities to the right hemisphere of the brain. Most felt that the learning activities would motivate students to do the work. Evaluators also seemed to approve of the journal as a more

facilitative way of teaching writing than the usual, as one evaluator put it, "ho-hum method." Evaluators also liked the fact that the students' writing grows out of their experience with the learning activities.

Weaknesses pointed out by the evaluations seemed to fall into two areas: an over-emphasis on the Gestalt approach and a need for more structure in the mastery of writing objectives. One evaluator expressed a concern that it would be difficult for a teacher without Gestalt training to facilitate the exercises effectively, despite the clarity of the directions. The writer was cognizant of this as being possibly problematical, and one of the recommendations in Chapter 5 suggests that the course be implemented by someone without special training in Gestalt Therapy in order to determine whether or not lack of specific training in Gestalt techniques would, indeed, be a problem. It should be pointed out that for most teachers, who are oriented toward teaching primarily in the cognitive domain, additional training in the development of affective objectives and the facilitation of learning activities oriented toward the affective domain would be a necessity.

It was also pointed out that additional learning activities dealing with the organization and sturcture of student writing should be added to the product. Evaluators seemed to feel that students would need additional assistance in shaping, organizing, and editing their private writing, or journal entries. This is a valid criticism, and will be taken into account in revising the product for future use.

Chapter 5

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

The major purpose of this project was to address a problem common to community college English teachers: increasing numbers of students with poor communication skills, especially in writing, and negative attitudes toward English. The problem was addressed by creating an experimental course for Freshman English Composition (English 120) students at Miami-Dade Community College, North Campus. The experimental course was holistic and confluent in that it synthesized the cognitive and affective domains by incorporating Gestalt Therapy techniques into the teaching of writing skills.

The course was implemented in two regular sections of English 120, at 12:00 and at 1:00, during the Fall Semester, 1976. A procedure was developed to evaluate the effectiveness of the product in the areas of self-actualization, attitudes toward verbal and written communication, and writing.

Product evaluation was oriented toward answering the following specific questions with respect to the areas just mentioned:

Changes in Self-Actualization

1. Will there be changes in self-actualization as measured by the Time Competence scale on the POI?
2. Will there be changes in self-actualization as measured by the Inner-directedness scale on the POI?

3. Will there be changes in self-actualization as measured by the Self-actualizing Values scale on the POI?

4. Will there be changes in self-actualization as measured by the Feeling Reactivity scale on the POI?

5. Will there be changes in self-actualization as measured by the Self-acceptance scale on the POI?

Changes in Attitudes Toward Verbal and Written Communication

6. Will there be changes in attitudes toward verbal and written communication?

Changes in Student Writing

7. Will there be changes in the focus and clarity of writing?

8. Will there be changes in the use of detail in student writing?

9. Will there be changes in the development of student writing?

Changes in Self-Actualization

Changes in self-actualization were determined by use of the Personality Orientation Inventory as a pre-test and as a post-test and by student self-evaluations and course evaluations written at the end of the semester.

Pre-test and post-test means for all twelve scales of the POI were tested by t-test for significance at the .05 level of significance. An increase was found to have occurred in all twelve scales of the POI. Increases significant at the .01 level occurred for the Inner Directedness scale, the Feeling Reactivity scale, the Acceptance of Agression scale, and the Capacity for Intimate Contact scale. An increase significant at the .05 level occurred for the Time Competence scale.

Comments made by students in their self-evaluations and evaluations of the course indicated that students felt they had learned a great deal

about themselves and were more in touch with their feelings. Some comments also indicated greater levels of self-acceptance.

Based on data from the POI and information from student self-evaluations the following Research Questions were answered "yes":

1. Will there be changes in self-actualization as measured by by the Time Competence scale on the POI?

2. Will there be changes in self-actualization as measured by the Inner-directedness scale on the POI?

4. Will there be changes in self-actualization as measured by the Feeling Reactivity scale on the POI?

The following Research Questions were answered "no":

3. Will there be changes in self-actualization as measured by the Self-actualizing Values scale on the POI?

5. Will there be changes on self-actualization as measured by the Self-acceptance scale on the POI?

Changes in Attitudes Toward Verbal and Written Communication

Determinations regarding changes in student attitudes toward verbal and written communication were based upon various forms of student self-reporting. A survey instrument developed by Dr. Alberta Goodman was adapted, with modifications based on papers students wrote on the first day of class enumerating writing difficulties.

The Communication Attitudes Survey (an adaptation of the Goodman Communications Survey) was administered at the end of the semester. A summary of the results as well as comments elicited from student self-evaluations indicated that student attitudes about verbal and written communication had become more positive. It was not possible to determine the exact degree to which this occurred.

Based upon this information, Research Question No. 6 (Will there be changes in attitudes toward verbal and written communication?) was answered "yes."

Changes in Student Writing

The Composition Rating Sheet, developed by the writer, was used to determine changes in student writing. The CRS consists of a series of twenty "yes" and "no" questions oriented toward focus and clarity, use of detail, and development, and other aspects of a good paper. Papers were rated using the CRS, and one point was awarded for each "yes" on the sheet.

Students wrote a Diagnostic Essay in a class period at the beginning of the semester and a Final Essay in a class period at the end of the semester. Both essays were rated internally on the CRS by the writer, by another student, and by the instructor. These three ratings were averaged for each paper. Additionally, the Final Essay was rated by a panel of three English instructors. These ratings were also averaged.

Comparison of the average rating on the Diagnostic Essay with the average internal rating on the Final Essay and with the average Panel rating indicated that student writing had improved overall. Application of Pearson's Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient indicated a high correlation between internal and panel ratings on the Final Essay with the use of the Composition Rating Sheet. Student comments in self-evaluations and course evaluations indicated that most students felt more comfortable about writing and that their writing had improved.

Based on this information, the following Research Questions were answered "yes":

7. Will there be changes in the focus and clarity of student writing?

8. Will there be changes in the use of detail in student writing?

9. Will there be changes in the development of student writing?

Evaluation By a Panel Of Experts

At the suggestion of Dr. John Roueche, Major Advisor for this project, the product was also evaluated by a national panel of experts in the areas of humanistic education, English, psychology, and Gestalt Therapy. This procedure was utilized in order to compensate for the lack of a control group. The panel filled out a questionnaire focusing on different aspects of the product, including the integration of the cognitive and affective domains. The overall evaluation was favorable.

Conclusions

Results of this study permit the drawing of general and specific conclusions. Following are conclusions which relate specifically to this study:

1. The findings indicate that the experimental course did have an impact upon the self-actualization of students.

2. Students indicated that they felt they had increased in self-awareness and self-understanding, as well as having improved in some interpersonal areas.

3. Students indicated that they did have an experience with one English Composition course which they considered interesting and worthwhile.

4. Students indicated that they did, at the end of the semester, find writing and communication less disagreeable and less difficult.

5. Students indicated that they felt they had improved in writing skills as a result of taking the experimental course.

6. The findings of the study indicated that student writing improved.

The following are general conclusions:

1. This study adds to the existing data which indicates that if an effort is made to foster growth in the affective area, gains will also occur in the cognitive area.

2. This study indicates that the strategy of offering a curriculum that deals with the affective as well as the cognitive domain is appropriate and viable as a means of teaching English Composition.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are based upon the findings and conclusions of this study:

1. The present study should be replicated by someone who has not had special training in Gestalt Therapy. One of the goals in designing the exercises for the product was to present a series of exercises that could be utilized by any teacher at any school. Replication of the study would indicate whether or not this is indeed possible.

2. The product and the experimental approach should be tested in a developmental studies or remedial class. This approach might be effective in such a class as it focuses upon awareness of and acceptance of self. Such a focus might be both beneficial and interesting to students in a developmental studies class.

3. All teachers in all community college classes should devote some attention to the building of the student's self-concept. This recommendation is based upon the fact that, despite the gains made during the course of the semester, both pre-test and post-test means were below the standard scores for most of the scales on the Personality Orientation Inventory.

4. Further research should be done to determine the validity of the Composition Rating Sheet. As mentioned previously, a high correlation was shown to exist between a rating of essays by a panel of English instructors and self-rating, peer rating, and instructor rating of the same essays, using the Composition Rating Sheet. The Composition Rating Sheet could prove to be a viable, somewhat standardizeable tool for English teachers in the evaluation of composition.

5. Further studies should be done to determine if there is a definite correlation between self-concept and ability to communicate, especially in writing.

6. It would be interesting to know if differences exist in a student's psychological space when s/he is told to do informal writing and when s/he is told to do formal writing. Two different types of writing result. Research is needed to determine the exact nature of the internal processes of students when they are given writing assignments.

7. The product developed as a part of this project should be utilized in an experimental design to determine differences which might exist in the performance of students in an experimental group, utilizing the product, and students in a control group in which a more standard approach to English Composition was utilized.

Implementation and Diffusion

Copies of the product were furnished to other instructors at Miami-Dade Community College, North Campus and Downtown Campus. These instructors, in the departments of English, psychology, mathematics, and office careers have begun using some of the strategies and exercises in the product in their own classes.

Members of the General Education Committee, which is presently involved in a re-assessment and restructuring of the General Education Program, have expressed interest in the project and have asked for copies of the entire project. Copies of the MARP will also be furnished to the Dean of Arts and Sciences and the Chairpersons of the English Department and the Behavioral Sciences Departments at the North Campus.

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APPENDIX A

English 120

RATIONALE:

This course will revolve, basically, around two concepts: Communication and awareness. There is a great tendency to value feeding information into the computer-head in our educational system. As a result, other important skills such as communication skills are de-emphasized or taken for granted. What results is some ability to absorb and regurgitate information, but insufficient ability to make oneself clear. This lack of clarity interferes with other educational goals and in relationships we have with other people and with life.

I believe more attention should be paid to each individual's communication skills, writing among others. We will cover basic writing skills ordinarily dealt with in a course of this type, emphasizing the process of organizing thoughts and ideas for transmission to others, their transmission, and the ways in which we receive the transmissions of others.

The other focus of the course will be on awareness--the lively uncritical receptivity to the here and now: awareness of ourselves and of our human and natural environment and the ways we interact with it. Each of us, including you, is a valid and worthwhile source of ideas, experience, awarenesses, feelings, and attitudes which we can explore and share with one another. Your own self-exploration and self-discovery will form the vast majority of the content of your writing.

GOAL I: BY THE END OF THE TERM, YOU SHOULD BE ABLE TO WRITE CLEARLY FOCUSED, LOGICALLY ORGANIZED, AND FULLY DEVELOPED ESSAYS OF VARYING LENGTHS WHICH COMMUNICATE ADEQUATELY.

Objectives: Given background information and practice under supervision in choosing a topic, planning and organizing the method of development, and supporting the major ideas with developmental details, by the completion of English 120, you should be able to:

a. Determine the specific purpose and the content of your own essays

b. Determine the significance and relevance of this content for you

c. Given definitions and examples of the terms below, plan your essays so that you have:

   1. Narrowed the subject to a scope appropriate to the length of the paper

   2. Clearly stated the main idea(s)

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3. Gathered details, examples, facts, etc., to support and develop the main idea(s)

4. Grouped supporting ideas and organized them in an order that will most effectively communicate the points(s) you want to make

d. Structure your essay so that it has:

1. An introduction and a conclusion

2. A well-developed, clearly stated main idea (thesis and/or topic sentence(s)

3. Adequate support for the main idea

4. A proper grouping of ideas into paragraphs

5. Communicated an impression that the reader can state briefly to you and have you agree that the reader has understood what you meant to say

GOAL 2: BY THE END OF THE COURSE YOU WILL DEMONSTRATE, IN JOURNAL ENTRIES, CLASS PARTICIPATION, AND SELF-EVALUATION, GROWTH IN SELF-AWARENESS AND SELF-ACCEPTANCE.

Objectives: By the completion of the course you will develop in the ability to:

a. Recognize and accept personal patterns of thinking, feeling, and action (style)

b. Increase awareness of your total being: body, gestures, thoughts, fantasies, feelings

c. Focus upon, separate, and intensify your awareness of

1. Internal processes

2. Perceptions of the human and natural environment

d. Differentiate between thought, emotion, and fantasy

e. Differentiate between observation and evaluation

f. Explicate clearly your awarenesses

g. Value yourself and your responses

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GOAL 3: BY THE COMPLETION OF THE COURSE YOU WILL DEMONSTRATE GROWTH IN RESPONSIBILITY (ABILITY TO RESPOND) AND WILLINGNESS TO ACCEPT RESPONSIBILITY FOR YOUR OWN LEARNING AND GROWTH.

Objectives: As demonstrated in journal entries, class participation, and self-evaluation, you will, at the completion of English 120, be able to:

a. Communicate in a variety of ways (read, write, talk, listen, observe) with enjoyment

b. Know and act on the principle that you are the one who acts, thinks, and feels whatever you act, think, and feel. No one else and nothing else can influence you except with your consent.

c. Initiate a class discussion and/or react voluntarily to the communicative efforts of others and to discussion or questions in class

d. Share something of yourself and your personal experience(s) with another member(s) of the class

e. Listen to and understand the feelings and opinions of others, providing proper feedback upon request and/or when appropriate

f. Trust and support your own interpretation of the learning experiences you encounter

g. Invite feedback on how you are being perceived by other members of the group and make a choice: change your viewpoint or behavior, modify it, or maintain it

h. Accept responsibility for self-direction in choosing materials, subjects, procedures, and goals for yourself

i. Evaluate your own learning and growth and determine to what extent you have met your personal goals

j. Evaluate the course and the facilitating and teaching of the instructor

PROCEDURES:

The initial class sessions will be designed to promote a spirit of openness, communication, and freedom. Many of the class activities will consist of a mixture of individual, small group, and large group exercises specifically selected and designed to promote personal experimentation and discovery. The class will not be an encounter group or a therapy group, but it will be a workshop, a laboratory where you will be invited to be yourself, explore your inner and outer world, and accept yourself.

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The primary goal of these exercises is to promote awareness; what you do with your awareness is up to you. Your experience of and reactions to these exercises, as well as insights and awarenesses you may gain will form much of the content for your writing in this class.

Films and other audiovisual materials will be utilized from time to time, in addition to instruction and supervision in specific writing skills.

You will be asked to keep a journal in a looseleaf notebook throughout the term; please bring the journal with you to class every day. In your journal you will keep any notes you take, class handouts, and all your writing assignments for the course. At the beginning of the semester I would like you to write in your journal every day we have class, whether or not I check it.

The purpose of writing every day is to "grease the wheels" and get things flowing, as it were. Some of you are afraid of writing. Others of you don't know you can express yourself and communicate in writing. After you become accustomed to the process of writing, you can begin to concentrate more on what you want to communicate. You may write reactions to and evaluations of classroom and group activities, about dreams, thoughts, feelings, perceptions, awarenesses, mind wandering, wool gathering, day dreaming, whatever. . . In additon, as we cover the formal aspects of writing a short essay in class, you will be given assignments dealing with this goal, which will also be kept in your journal. I will collect your journals and read them at specified intervals, but they will be shared no further unless you choose otherwise.

Each of you will turn in a separately written self-evaluation in which you assess your performance and growth in the various areas covered by this course. You will decide upon and justify a letter grade which you think you have earned for the semester. This paper is to be a demonstration of the best of your writing skills and will serve as a final examination. You will also evaluate the course and the insturctor. You have the option of including this in your final evaluation or of doing it separately.

Grading Point System

A =
B =
C =
F = fewer than _____ points
I = failure to earn enough points for the grade of "C" for a justifiable reason

Points may be earned in the following ways:

a. 1 point per class for attending class and participating fully in class activities

b. Up to 20 points apiece for each of three compositions to be turned in during the semester. These will be rated in the Composition Rating Sheet, with 1 point assigned for every "yes" answer on the CRS. You may select journal entries to be rated, or you may write compositions especially for this purpose.

NOTE: The last of these three compositions is to be a self-evaluation and an evaluation of the course.* In evaluating yourself, select a letter grade you think you have earned during the semester and justify it. This will be turned in at the end of the semester (on or before a specified date) and will count as your final examination.

*If you are not comfortable about including an evaluation of the course in this paper, you may write it separately and turn it in anonymously.

c. Up to 20 points each time you turn your journal in for evaluation. This must be done a minimum of twice during the semester. Each time I evaluate your journals, I will be looking for and will assign points on the basis of different criteria. (You may also use these criteria in writing your self-evaluation at the end of the semester.)

FIRST READING:

a. Entry for every class day

b. Use of correct ego language ("I" instead of "you" when referring to yourself and your experiences, exceptions, opinions, etc.)

c. Use of specific detail

d. Attempt to incorporate class experiences and learning into journal entries

e. Attempt to develop ideas, i.e. to discuss an idea, a feeling, an experience, or a perception long enough to show clearly what is meant

f. Mechanical and careless errors will be marked, but will not be counted against you unless it makes the entry incomprehensible

SECOND READING:

a. Change and improvement! (Especially in areas focused on in First Reading)

b. Evidence of having followed suggestions made in comments from First Reading

c. Fuller and more complete development of ideas

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d. Inclusion of entries demonstrating awareness of your total being: body, gestures, thoughts, feelings, fantasies, dreams, etc., rather than diary-type entries ("Today I did this, and then I did that. . .")

e. Mechanical and careless errors will be considered as part of the evaluation this time

KEEPING A JOURNAL:

Keeping a journal may not seem very liberated, but one of the reasons I use it in this course, other than the obvious reason that it is a writing course, is that I feel that perhaps the most important kind of communication you have is communicating with yourself. A lot of what we will be doing will be oriented toward turning in to self, and a journal seems to fit better with that kind of orientation. I think a journal has other advantages:

1. It is a relatively painless way to get in the habit of regular writing.

2. It allows you to communicate with yourself in a visible form.

3. It can be, if you choose to make it so, a medium for you to express ideas, feelings, questions, perceptions, observations, gripes, etc., which you have never shared with anybody, even yourself. It's a good outlet.

4. It gives you a chance to go back at time intervals and see where your head was and where it is going. You may perceive patterns of behavior or feeling that will contribute to your self-understanding and growth.

5. It can give you perspective on your ideas and problems because it gets them "out there" where you can look at them.

6. It is a way to share your feelings, perceptions, and growing awarenesses with others.

A journal is really not for restating events, i.e., "this happened, and then that happened," unless they are really special events that you don't want to forget. The subject matter of your entries will be largely up to you. Entries need not relate to the class or classroom activities, although they certainly can. Occasionally you will be asked to react to a certain experience in class or follow a certain format or pattern of writing that relates to what we're doing in class.

Generally speaking, the most important elements to be aware of when writing in a journal are your feelings and sensations while you are experiencing an activity;any lingering feelings that are still with you; perceptions and insights that you reach about anyone and anything;

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conclusions; questions; reactions;, positive and/or negative about me or any class activity. I would suggest that you concentrate more on keeping the flow of ideas going than on getting every comma in the right place. That you communicate something which you or someone else can understand is more important than mechanics. Length may vary, but try to make your entries long enough to mean something. About 100 words per entry is a workable rule of thumb.

Since your journal is about you, "I", "me", "my" will naturally crop up a lot, and this is as it should be, regardless of what your past English teachers have told you. To say "I" when referring to yourself is preferred; to say "you" in talking about yourself is not acceptable. In addition to regular writing you may want to include poetry, pictures, cartoons, or anything else that expresses something you want to communicate. Try to write without worrying about whether your feelings, opinions, and attitudes are right or wrong. Whatever they are, they just ARE, and you have a right to them. Distinguish between think and feel; they are different. How free you feel to express whatever is going on with you will probably depend to a great extent on your trust level with me. I understand that.

Your journals are private and confidential. I will not share them with anyone.

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Ice Breakers

TO THE TEACHER:

It is wise to structure several exercises to help the students get acquainted with one another and learn each others' names, particularly in a class where they will later be asked to take some risks. These exercises are also helpful in assisting the facilitator/teacher to learn students' names, and something about each student.

EXERCISE 1

Have students select a partner, someone they don't know. Have them interview their partner and prepare a brief introduction in which they introduce their partner to the rest of the class, and vice versa. Suggest that they avoid the usual information such as where they went to high school, major, etc. Suggest that they ask their partner questions such as sign of the zodiac, favorite food, least favorite food, favorite musical group, things they like to do in their spare time, chores they hate to do most, whether or not they would take English if it weren't required, how they feel about reading, how they feel about writing, etc. The introduction should take three to five minutes.

OR

Have students select a partner, someone they don't know. Suggest that they exchanges wallets, and construct a brief introduction of their partner from pictures, membership cards, and other things they find in the partner's wallet. (From AustinLett, Genelle and Jan Sprague, Talk To Yourself: Experiencing Intrapersonal Communication. Atlanta: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1976.)

EXERCISE 2

Have students sit in a circle. One student begins by saying his/her first name. The student on his/her right repeats the first name and adds his/hers. The game continues around the circle, with everyone having to repeat a gradually growing list of names. Students are allowed to ask directly anyone whose name they have forgotten. The game comes all the way around the circle until the person who started has to repeat the name of everyone in the circle. Teacher should participate.

Have all the students get up and move to a different seat and let volunteers name all the students in the circle.

EXERCISE 3

Have students all stand in the center of the room. Then ask a series of questions such as, "Are you a loner or a joiner?" "Would you eat at McDonald's or a gourmet restaurant?" "Would you listen to the Moody Blues or Earth, Wind, and Fire?" "Are you a mountain or the ocean?" "Are you a spender or a saver?"

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Designate opposite sides of the room for the two alternatives with each question you ask. Have students go to the side of the room that matches their preference for each question. Allow time between questions for students to discuss their reasons for choosing that alternative, find out each other's names, as well as see who has similar tastes.

AWARENESS

Think about the idea of awareness. What does the word mean to you? Jot down your ideas below.

Awareness as we will speak of it in this class will be oriented primarily in the direction of awareness as it is referred to in Gestalt therapy, as developed and practised by Dr. Fritz Perls. Although this will be a class, not a therapy group, the term Gestalt "therapy" is used to make a distinction from Gestalt psychology, which is different.

Awareness is defined in the course outline as ". . .lively uncritical receptivity to the here and now." We could also think of awareness as something like the process of shining a light on something. What happens when you shine a light on something? You can see what's there; whatever is taking place is illuminated and comes to the foreground or becomes more prominent in your attention. Whatever the light is not shining on recedes to the background and becomes less important.

Awareness <u>does</u> involve being open to looking at, paying attention to. . .

Awareness <u>does not</u> involve passing judgments (This is good; this is bad; this is right; this is wrong, etc., etc., etc., etc.,. . .), or trying to figure out "why" or explaining "because." There are only two obscene words in Gestalt"why" and "because."

Fritz Perls speaks of three Zones of Awareness.

1. <u>Awareness of the inner world, inner reality</u>. This consists of physical sensations and emotions, primarily. Are you aware that we experience most of our emotions in the physical body as well as experiencing them emotionally?

   For example: I feel sad. I have a lump in my throat.
   I am scared. My stomach is tight.

   Other examples of inner awareness: I am hungry. My stomach feels empty. My feet hurt. I am aware of tension in my neck. I feel happy. I feel like laughing.

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2. Awareness of the outside world, external reality. This kind of awareness is completely dependent upon the senses. The only way we have of perceiving external reality is through the information we gather with our five senses: what we see, what we hear, what we smell, what we touch, and what we taste.

   For example: I hear the air conditioner humming.
   I see John's red shirt.
   I smell something burning.
   I feel the hard seat of the chair under me.
   I taste the cinnamon flavor of the gum I'm chewing.

3. Head awareness. This includes thoughts, ideas, plans, fantasies, daydreams, "head trips," whatever they may consist of, etc., etc., etc., etc. Most of us spend a good bit of time in this area of awareness.

   Examples of head awareness: I wonder what time it is?
   I think I'll go to a movie tonight.
   My father's gonna be furious when he sees the car.
   I hope I make an "A" in this class.

As an experiment, try recording exactly what goes through your head for a couple of minutes. You are being asked to recordnot organize, capitalize, censor, judge.

What do you notice about your head and the way it works?

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Did you write in complete sentences? Paragraphs? Organize?

See if you can describe the way your head works.

Most people think in a series of disconnected thoughts, images--something like a ping pong ball. No capitals, commas, or periods.

Be aware, then, that when you are asked to write, in a class like this, you are being asked to perform a process which is not natural. Writing in sentences, paragraphs, with capital letters and periods is an artificial process, and as such, can be learned.

Begin five sentences with the phrase, "Now I am aware of. . ." and complete the sentence.

Now go back and label the zone of awareness from which each sentence comes. Where is most of your awareness concentrated? In one zone? In all three?

Now choose a partner and sit facing each other. Alternate with your partner in finishing aloud sentences which begin with the phrase, "Now I am aware of. . ." See what happens.

How do you feel in doing this?

Are you aware of any discomfort?

If so, where?

Are you willing to share your discomfort with your partner?

Where, meaning what zone, were most of the awarenesses you shared with your partner?

Your partner with you?

Did you learn anything about yourself?

What?

(I recommend this as a good journal exercise if you ever can't think of anything else to write.)

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TO THE TEACHER:

Hand out the sheet entitled "Perception or New Ways of Looking at Things." Have them answer the questions individually and then share their responses in groups of three or four.

Suggest that they get feedback from other group members on such questions as the texture of their names.

Take a poll of the entire class to see which sense they report as using most, and which sense they report using the least. The vast majority of students will report that they use sight most often, hearing second most often, and touch least. Use the description exercise which follows to let them experience how well they use the sense of sight.

English 120 Name _____

PERCEPTION

(Some New Ways of Looking at Things)

1. What is your favorite color?

2. How does it smell?

3. What color is Sunday?

4. How would you describe the texture of your own name?

5. How does purple taste?

6. Describe the smells and sounds associated with your favorite day. . . your least favorite day.

7. How does a roast beef sandwich sound?

8. What is your favorite material (glass, wood, leather, cloth, moss, rock, etc.) to look at?

9. What is its texture?

10. What is its color?

11. What is its taste?

12. Which of your five senses do you use most often? Least often?

English 120

Sensory Awareness

and

Use of Detail

TO THE TEACHER:

Show the film "Zen and Now" (Hartley Productions, approx. 25 minutes). When the film is over, ask students to write in their journals what they saw and what they heard. Give them a few minutes to write, and then ask them these questions:

How many objects did you name?

How many colors did you name?

How many adjectives or descriptive words did you use in describing what you saw and heard?

Did you focus on the colors and the scenery or did you try to follow the ideas presented in the narrative?

How many of you found that you tended to focus more on the cognitive message of the background narrative than on the visual effects of the movie or the music?

Did you find that your head tended to interfere with your sensory experience?

NOTE: The purpose of this exercise is to make students aware of sensory details in the film and to give them experience in using eyes and ears to collect data that may be used in writing. Remind them also that these details come from the third zone of awareness, external awareness. The film is simply a visual trip through the garden of the producer, with a very low key background music. Alan Watts provides a background narrative, also very low-key, in which he discusses some of the basic aspects of Zen. Some students will focus on the background narrative and let their heads get caught up with the ideas, despite the directions. Others will focus on the sensory details.

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PERCEPTION

TO THE TEACHER:

Make a large poster upon which you write in colored pen the names of several colors, such as:

orange green yellow black purple red green

brown yellow purple red orange green black

red yellow red brown purple blue orange pink

As you write the name of the color, take care to use a felt-tip pen of a different color than the color you are writing with, as writing the color "red" with blue pen, etc.

Ask students to read the color rather than the word. Let several students try or let them all try silently. Then have them read it backwards, or upside down.

Ask them to tell you what happens. Most will report that it is easier to read the chart backwards or upside down than right side up in conventional style.

The purpose of the exercise is to help students become aware of the degree to which head or cognitive input interferes with sensory experience.

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DESCRIPTION

TO THE TEACHER:

Have students choose a partner. Have them sit opposite their partner and study the partner's face for three or four minutes, without talking. (It is preferable for students to sit on the floor to do this, if possible.) Ask them to notice such things as whether their partner's face is symetrical or not, and ways in which the two sides of the face differ.

Then have the partners sit back to back and take turns describing the other's face to that person. Have them turn around and face their partner again and verify the accuracy of their description.

Have them discuss such questions as: how they felt sitting and looking at another person silently; what's the worst that can happen from having another person sit and look at you; whether, in their descriptions, they stuck to descriptive details such as, "You have dark, straight eyebrows and large dark eyes," or tended to describe in terms of their fantasies, such as, "You seem very nice and understanding, and I think you're good at picking up vibes."

How well do they really use their eyes?

English 120

MEDITATION AND TRIP THROUGH THE BODY

TO THE TEACHER:

The purpose of this exercise is twofold: 1. to practice internal awareness, and 2. to introduce the students to meditation and to a Gestalt technique called "the trip through the body." It will also give them practice in playing the role of the detached observer and provide content for a journal entry.

Have the students move their chairs into a large circle. They may also be allowed to sit or lie on the floor. If they are not accustomed to sitting on the floor, they should arrange to provide support for their backs by leaning against a wall or a chair. Ask them to sit with their spines straight, but not stiff, and suggest that they leave their legs and arms uncrossed. Ask them to experiment with different sitting positions until they find one that is comfortable.

It is also a good idea to turn lights in the room down very low or off altogether. Some kind of music, such as "Music for Zen Meditation" by Tony Scott or "Inside" by Paul Horn may also be used to screen out background noise. Any music used should be very low-key, so as to provide a background and not a distraction.

The following directions should be read by the teacher at a leisurely pace, allowing students time to fully experience each aspect of the exercise. Pauses will be marked by a /.

THE EXERCISE:

Sit comfortably in your chair and let's label this an experiment/ Be willing to allow whatever happens to take place of its own accord, and try not to force or make an effort to do anything/ Just pay attention to what you do with the suggestions I am about to make/ As I call your attention to different parts of your body see if you can develop an attitude of interest and curiosity and simply look at how you feel and what is going on/

Begin by getting in touch with your breathing/ Don't try to change it, simply pay attention to it/ See how far you let the air go with each breath/ How far do you let it go before you stop it?/ Be aware of the temperature of the air as you breath it in/ Feel the warmer air that you breathe out/ Now let's take a deep breath and hold it/ and let it out slowly/ Now go back to your normal breathing pattern/ Allow your mouth to open slightly and inhale through your mouth/ Once again, feel the cool air that you breathe in, and the warmer air that you breathe out/ Now I'd like you to take three deep breaths in a row, and I'll count them for you. Let's take the first one/ and hold it/ Now let it out slowly/ Now the second one/ and hold it/ and let it out slowly/ Now let's take the third one/ and hold it/ Now let it out slowly/ Now go back to your normal breathing pattern/ Once again, see how far you let the air go before you stop it/

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Meditation and Trip Through the Body Continued

Now I'd like you to focus your awareness on different parts of your body as I call them to your attention. Begin with your feet/ See if you can feel your feet in contact with the floor or with the soles of your shoes/ See if you can feel all ten of your toes without moving them/ Now focus on both of your feet/ Do both feet feel the same?/ Now focus your awareness on your ankles/ See if you can really feel the bend in your ankles/ Now focus on your calves and shins/ See how they feel/ Do both legs feel the same?/ Pay particular attention to your shins/ See if there are any areas in your shins where you seem not to have any feeling at all/ Now feel your knees/ your thighs/ See if you can feel your clothing in contact with your thighs, and your thighs in contact with the chair or the floor/ Now feel all of both legs/ Do both legs feel the same?/ Now focus your awareness on your rear end/ Feel it in contact with the chair or the floor/ Now feel your genitals/ the lower part of your back/ Now experience your stomach and abdomen. The stomach is one place where we carry a lot of tension/ See how tight your stomach feels, or if you're holding it tense by holding your breath/ Once again, let's take a deep breath and hold it/ and let it out slowly/ and go back to your normal breathing/

Now pay attention to your back/ See if you can feel your spinal column/ Feel your back in contact with the chair or the wall/ Now become aware of your chest/ Check to see how far you're letting the air go/ Now feel your shoulders/ and move down to your arms/ Move your awareness down your arms to your hands/ Feel both hands/ Do they feel the same?/ See if you can feel all of your fingers without moving them/ Now move back up your arms to your shoulders again/ Become aware of your neck/ The neck is an area where we always carry a great deal of tension. In addition, the neck has the job of supporting the head, which is one of the heavier parts of the body. Now move your head on your neck until you find a position where your neck is comfortable and doesn't have to work to hold your head where it is/ Experiment with several until you find a position where your neck is comfortable/ Now become aware of your jaw/ Are you clenching it?/ Allow your jaw to drop a bit and experiment with how it feels when it's relaxed/ Now pay attention to the rest of your face/ See if you can feel your nose/ your eyes/ your ears/ Become aware of and see if you can feel your hair/ Now feel your head as a whole/ your body as a whole/ Once again, focus on your breathing and see what you're doing with it/

Now I'd like you to think about coming back to this room/ In your own time and at your own pace, bring yourself slowly and gently back to this room--now/ Whenever you feel ready, open your eyes and look around you/ Stretch, as though you'd just wakened from a nap/ Get in touch with yourself and see how you feel/

Meditation and Trip Through the Body Continued

When most of the students have stretched and are moving around to the extent that you are satisfied that they are back "here" turn on the lights. Ask the students to describe in as much specific detail as possible what they experienced during the exercise, and ask them to write this in their journals.

For receiving feedback from the students, ask them to think of one word that best describes how they experienced this exercise. Go around the room and have each share his/her word without having to explain.

This exercise can take anywhere from twenty to forty-five minutes, depending on how slowly you want to go through the instructions.

English 120

INTRODUCTION TO GESTALT THERAPY

TO THE TEACHER:

Arrange to show the film, "What Is Gestalt?" (Aquarian Productions, 25 minutes). In it, Fritz Perls talks about some of the basic ideas of Gestalt Therapy and how it fits into the context of today's society. (Warn students that they will have to contend with Perls' rather thick German accent.) He also demonstrates the use of the Awareness Continuum and the "hot seat." Students can see how the Top Dog/Under Dog polarity actually functions in the work of the volunteer.

Ask them to start a Gestalt Glossary and to listen in the movie for definitions of terms such as:

catastrophic fantasy

anxiety

guilt

Top Dog

Under Dog

mind fucking

neurotic

experience (as it is used in the context of Gestalt Therapy)

These terms should be discussed and any questions answered at the end of the movie.

You may want to introduce students to the idea that two parts of themselves can be in dialogue by using this exercise:

Freeze. Don't move any part of your body until I ask you to. Now focus your awareness on two parts of your body that are in contact. Give yourself plenty of time to really experience how these two parts of your body feel. Now imagine that each of these two parts of your body that are now in contact has a voice. Let them talk to each other and imagine the conversation that they might have. Now write that dialogue in your journal.

English 120

THE NAME OF THE GAME IS

"KNOW YOUR ENEMY"

Alan Watts once defined thinking as". . . talking to yourself inside your head." As you may have discovered in some of the earlier exercises we've done, your head is usually pretty busy. If you really focus on the acitivity in your head, you may discover that what is going on is a dialogue with two principle players. The purpose of this exercise is to help you make their acquaintance and to externalize the dialogue, chatter, or war, as the case may be, that goes on inside your head.

Fritz Perls labeled the two characters who carry on the dialogue "Top Dog" and "Under Dog." Top Dog conforms very closely to Freud's Superego or to what we often refer to as the conscience. Top Dog is usually very self-righteous. Top Dog's style is to tell you "you should," or "you'd better," or "you ought to. . ." Top Dog is also a threatener. "You better do your homework, or you'll fail." "You'd better not say that, or people won't like you." "You'd better do this or society will condemn you." "Don't talk about how you feel or people will think you're strange." Top Dog's style is to make lots of demands and then threaten us with catastrophes if we don't do whatever is being demanded. Top Dog, then, is the producer of catastrophic fantasies. Your own Top Dog style will vary, but will usually be a variation of this theme. Top Dog is also pretty straightforward and direct, both in making demands and in producing threats.

Top Dog is very close to the head. Much of Top Dog's material comes from parents, teachers, and the things "everybody" knows are true about society. In a sense then, Top Dog is just running a bunch of tapes that come from authority figures around us--pretty cerebral.

Under Dog, on the other hand, has an endless variety of ploys. Under Dog can be a whiner and a complainer, can play "Poor me. I try so hard." Under Dog will often say things like, "Oh, I agree. You're right. I should do those things. Oh, I'll try--tomorrow." Under Dog makes excuses, complains, makes promises, says s/he's trying (not doing, but trying). Surprisingly enough, Under Dog is usually in control, despite the fact that s/he often ends up giving in to Top Dog, without whose approval s/he feels s/he cannot live. But if you pay careful attention to yourself, or to someone else who is doing the TD/UD dialogue out loud, it is almost always possible to detect that Under Dog hasn't given in completely--there is still a hope or a plan that Under Dog can get what s/he wants without incurring Top Dog's disapproval. If all else fails, Under Dog will lie and cheat, or resort to trying to get his/her way by devious means. Above all, Under Dog is a good frustrator. Though seemingly overwhelmed by Top Dog, Under Dog will often resort to games like playing deaf, "Oh, I didn't hear you," or playing stupid, "I don't know what you mean. Explain it again."

English 120

One of Under Dog's favorite frustrator games is the game of putting it off--playing procrastinator. "I know I should study now, but I'll study better if I have something to eat first." Or, "I'll take just a short nap now--that way I'll be rested when I study." Or, "Right after this one show, I'll turn off the T. V. and do my homework." One word that will give you a clue that Under Dog is trying to frustrate Top Dog is the word "but." "I know I should write the report, but I can't until I get the notes from Joe, and I won't see him until tomorrow." "But I'm trying." Recognize any of these?

Perls labels the game that goes on between these two clowns of the personality "the self-torture" game, and it does, indeed, seem never-ending. Under Dog is pretty determined to get what s/he wants without having to take responsibility for it, and pretty adept at blaming the world, other people, mommy and daddy, anybody but him/her self when things don't happen the way s/he wants them to. Top Dog seems determined to have absolute and total control of our lives at any and all times, and threatens us with rejection, loss of love, persecution, and destruction for not doing what s/he demands. We justify trying to live up to Top Dog's impossible demands with the term "conscience," but conscience seldom prevents anybody from doing what they want to do--only from enjoying it.

English 120

TOP DOG/UNDER DOG EXERCISE

TO THE TEACHER:

Structure an exercise designed to allow students to make the acquaintance of their individual Top Dog/Under Dog polarities and get a feel for their styles.

Have students work with a partner, a person with whom they feel fairly comfortable. Each group of two will need three chairs. One of the duo is to begin as worker; the other will be the observer. Then they will reverse roles and repeat the exercise.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE WORKER:

Sit in one of the chairs and place the empty chair opposite you. Begin as Top Dog and imagine that you see yourself sitting opposite in the empty chair. As Top Dog, begin making demands on the imaginary you sitting in the chair opposite. You can begin with school work or things related to school, if you are uncomfortable with the possibility of getting into material that is too personal. Examples: "You should study more." "You should do your homework after every class." "You shouldn't watch so much T. V." You may either go through a long list of "should's" or "shouldn't's" before you switch chairs and respond, or you may switch and respond after each demand Top Dog makes. In either case, give yourself enough time in each chair to experience how you feel. How does your body feel in each position? How do you sit? How strong do you feel? Are you willing to look at the party in the other chair? How strong is your voice in each chair? Whom do you feel has most of the power?

Switch back and forth at least three or four times, so that you get a good feeling for what goes on with you as Top Dog and as Under Dog. Then describe your perceptions of your style as both Top Dog and as Under Dog to your partner. Think of words to label the style of Top Dog and Under Dog. Would you, for example, describe Top Dog as mean, vicious, sarcastic, a bully, strong, authoritarian, self-righteous, etc., etc.? How would you describe Under Dog? Whining, blaming, defensive, giving lots of excuses, stubborn, resistant, making promises, etc., etc? Your partner will also give you feedback on what s/he has observed. Incorporate this information into a journal entry in which you describe as specifically as possible your style as Top Dog and Under Dog. Who has the power? Did you learn anything new about yourself?

NOTE: This exercise may not be comfortable for you at first, as the situation may seem artificial and you have probably never talked to an empty chair. You do, however talk to yourself all the time, and in each conversation that goes on in your head there is a talker and a

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TD/UD Exercise Continued

listener. It is these two parts that the exercise is designed to help you get in touch with and we are merely making what goes on inside explicit, so that you can get a closer look at some of the ways you make yourself uncomfortable. I am asking you to look at this as an experiment and see what happens. You will probably also find that your discomfort diminishes as you become more involved.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE OBSERVER:

Your task is to observe your partner as s/he plays the roles of Top Dog and Under Dog. Look for things such as posture in each role. Observe what your partner does with hands and feet in each position, i. e, a jabbing forefinger as Top Dog, arms crossed over the chest as Under Dog. Listen for tone and strength of voice in each role.

Observe whether or not the two seem to look at each other, or at the floor or ceiling. Do they seem to talk to and listen to each other, or talk "at" each other?

Watch for facial expressions such as smiles, frowns, grimaces, etc. Does Under Dog smile as s/he contritely promises to do better, for example? Confine your observations to what you can see and hear; do not analyze or interpret. For example, "When you were Top Dog, you pointed with your finger a lot," or "As Under Dog, you were swinging your foot and you had a smile on your face."

You may take notes, if you need to. When your partner finishes, share your observations with him/her. Then switch roles, and you become the Worker, and your partner the observer.

TO THE TEACHER:

It is usually a good idea to let students share as much as they want to about what they experienced. Ask questions such as how many found that Under Dog had the power? How many found that Top Dog had the power? Did they gain any insights about how these two clowns function in their school lives, their everyday lives?

It may also be helpful to show the movie, "What is Gestalt?" in which Fritz Perls discusses some of the concepts of Gestalt and demonstrates working with an individual.

Suggest that students may also write TD/UD dialogues as journal entries.

English 120

SENSORY AWARENESS EXERCISE

TO THE TEACHER:

The purpose of this exercise is to provide the students with experience in using senses other than sight in gathering information and details about the world. It will also provide them with content for a journal entry in which they will be encouraged to use as many specific details from their experience as possible. This exercise is also preparation for the blind walk, in that they will have a chance to become accustomed to being blindfolded.

Have the students arrange their chairs in a circle. Explain to them that they will be blindfolded and that you will pass a series of objects around the room while they are blindfolded and that they are to use all of their senses, except sight, of course, to gain as much information about each of the objects as possible. Ask them to be aware, while they are doing this, if they are trying to use their senses to experience each object or whether they are concentrating their energies on trying to guess what the objects are. It is important to note again the extent to which computing interferes with experiencing.

Pass out blindfolds to each student. Ask the students to sit quietly a moment and look around the room before putting their blindfolds on. When they have blindfolded themselves, ask them again to sit quietly and get in touch with themselves and their breathing, any catastrophic fantasies about what might happen while they sit in a room blindfolded, etc. Ask them not to talk while the objects are being passed around, and not to say anything if they happen to guess what the objects are. Tell them also that you will give each of them something to eat, and likewise, they are not to say anything out loud if they guess what it is. Ask them to pass objects to their right, and to let you know by raising their hands, when an object has been all the way around the circle.

Use objects such as a bean bag, a stuffed animal, a wig, a rock, a conch shell, a computer card, a book of matches, a gourd or a bean pod that rattles, and a scented candle or scented wax statue. Give each of them a food that has some texture as well as taste, such as a grape or a miniature marshmallow. Five or six objects should be enough. Ask them to be aware of sounds in the room and odors such as someone's perfume while they are waiting for an object to come to them.

When the objects have all been around, ask the students to sit quietly again and get in touch with themselves. You might also have them talk to each other while blindfolded, or explore and experience either one of their own or their neighbor's hands. Then let them remove the blindfolds, and ask them to sit quietly again until they feel fully grounded in the room. Then ask them to look around them.

English 120

Sensory Awareness Exercise Continued

You may want to process the exercise orally or simply have students write in their journals immediately. Cover such things as how they felt being blindfolded, what senses they became aware of when deprived of sight, the kinds of head messages that were produced, how they felt talking to someone when they couldn't see. For the journal entry, ask them to use as many specific sensory details as possible in describing the objects that they touched. Ask them how many of them concentrated on trying to guess what the objects were. You may also want to ask them to think of one word that best describes their experience and have them share that word.

English 120

BLIND WALK EXERCISE

TO THE TEACHER:

This exercise has many uses. It is an excellent way to give students first-hand experience in exploring and experiencing the environment without the use of sight. It provides excellent content for a journal entry, as the experience is usually a meaningful one for students. It may also be useful in terms of letting students have a first-hand look at the world of the non-sighted.

Have the students work with a partner. Let them decide who will be guide first and who will be blindfolded. Give them a time at which they should change roles and a deadline for returning to the classroom.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE GUIDE:

First of all, remember that you are responsible for the safety and well-being of your partner, who will shortly become <u>your</u> guide. Try to give your partner as many sensory experiences as possible, such as letting him/her walk on concrete, stones, grass, riding in an elevator, getting a drink of water, lighting a cigarette, feeling a tree, shaking hands with someone, smelling a flower, etc. Please don't play tricks on your partner, and remember that there are other classes in session.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE BLINDFOLDED PERSON:

Imagine that you are a Martian and that you have just landed on the planet earth and found a friendly earthling to show you around. You can't see because there is some problem with the atmosphere of this planet. Rather than spend your time guessing about where you are on campus, see if you can use your other sense to gain as much information about this planet as possible. See how much you can learn about earth people and their environment.

TO THE TEACHER:

Have the students write about this experience in their journals. Suggest that they discuss how they felt being the guide, and how they felt being blindfolded. Ask them to get in touch with how they felt being the guide, and how they felt being blindfolded. Ask them to get in touch with how their bodies feel, how they are breathing, and what kind of head messages are being generated. Ask them to discuss such things as how they felt about other people, how it felt to walk, the things they came in contact with, etc.

English 120

ORGANIZING WRITING

TO THE TEACHER:

As an alternative to letting students complete the "Organizing Writing" exercise entirely by themselves, you might use these alternatives.

Have students who are willing read the first sentence, "The purpose of these details is to _____." aloud. Discuss the purpose of writing such a journal entry, other than they were requested to do so by the instructor. Most of them will agree that they were attempting to describe or explain how they felt or how they experienced the exercise.

Again with the second and third sentences, let those who are willing or who would like suggestions or feedback from the teacher read theirs aloud.

After students have completed the re-reading of their individual entries, ask them if they would be willing to share that entry with members of the class. If most reply affirmatively, let them work in groups of three. Each member of the group should read his/her entry aloud, as well as the suggestions (specific suggestions) each would make for improving his/her own paper. Then let them also receive suggestions from improvement or positive feedback from the other group members. This exercise can be repeated several times through the semester, with students being allowed to select journal entries they would be willing to share with other members of the class.

Then ask them questions such as:

How many of you found that those in your group were kinder to you in making suggestions about your entry than you were to yourself? In other words, how many of you found that Top Dog had read your entry?

If Top Dog did read your entry, were the suggestions s/he made for improvement specific, such as "You need to add more details here," or "You forgot to stop a sentence there," or were they global, such as "This is rotten! You can't write."?

How often does Top Dog read what you write and criticize you? Top Dog's criticism will often tend to be a global or total rejection, not only of your writing, but also of you as a writer. Be on the lookout for that.

Then suggest that students incorporate the feedback they have received from their peers in revising the entry. Also suggest that an acceptable journal entry is going back and revising or correcting errors in previous entries.

ORGANIZING
W I I G
R T N

Use one of your journal entries from earlier this week. I suggest you use the entry you wrote concerning your experience on the blind walk--or the one about the sensory awareness experience. Read again what you have written. When you have finished reading your entry, complete this sentence:

The purpose of these details is to _____.

Now re-read your entry, but this time pretend you are me, the teacher, reading your entry, and complete this sentence:

The general impression I get from reading this is _____

_____.

Use the information from the two sentences above to construct a sentence which:

a. Introduces the main idea of the entry without being too specific, and

b. Serves as a beginning or introduction to the entry.

Once again, imagine that you are me (or anybody else, for that matter) and read your introductory sentence and your entry once more. This time, make some very specific suggestions to yourself for improving the entry if you wanted to develop it into a more formal paper. (Hint: use the Composition Rating Sheet as a guide.)

Write your suggestions here.

Now, use your introductory sentence as a beginning, and follow your own suggestions in re-writing your entry. (In your journal.)

English 120 NAME _____

USE OF DETAIL

Details are extremely important in writing. The more numerous and specific the details, the easier it is for the reader to tune in to what you're talking about. Use the details given below to draw (to the best of your ability) the animal described.

Shy, gentle, and inoffensive, the Lemur is among the most attractive and gentle of primates. Fifty million years ago--long before the appearance of monkeys and apes--lemur-like creatures were widespread, appearing in Europe, North America and Africa. Today, the Lemur family is found only in Madagascar and the Comaro Islands off the southeastern coast of Africa. For the desperately vulnerable Lemur these island fortresses were evidently protection against large carnivores.

A treetop dweller, the Black Lemur is a gregarious animal, traveling in a noisy band of fifteen to twenty. Usually twelve to eighteen inches high, both the pitch black male and rusty brown female are whiskered and have penetrating orange eyes. These keen-eyes and agile creatures will bound from branch to branch, endlessly grunting in seeming satisfaction, whistling and shrieking should they be alarmed or excited. When not climbing or looking for insects or berries, they will contentedly sunbathe and groom each other's coats.

The Lemur's name is a derivative of the Latin word for ghosts or spectres. This is due to the respectful belief--still prevalent among the Madagascan natives--that the spirtis of the dead take residence in the bodies of Lemurs. (From "International Wildlife: Endangered Species." Current, Inc., Colorado Springs, Colorado)

Use the back of the paper to draw the animal thus described (to the best of your ability.) "A fabulous beast with the head and wings of an eagle and the body of a lion." (From The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language, New College Edition. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1976.)

English 120

NON-VERBAL COMMUNICATION

TO THE TEACHER:

Arrange to show the film "Communication--The Non-Verbal Agenda" (McGraw-Hill, approximately 30 minutes). The film is oriented toward management and office situations, but does deal with non-verbal aspects of communication and body language. Ask students to pay particular attention to the body language and non-verbal messages that are transmitted by the individuals in the film. Ask them to pay particular attention to the following:

1. In one scene, there is a business meeting, where people are sitting around a table. One man is "on the carpet." Watch his hands and mouth. One woman plays "rescuer." How does she do it? What subtle message is transmitted by being helpful?

2. How would you label the behavior of the girl in black?

3. In another scene, a manager is making the same speech to each of three subordinates. What behaviors do you notice in each of the three that gives you a clue to how they might be feeling?

   The woman?

   The first man? How does he indicate his aggression or hostility passively? How does his boss assert dominance?

   The second man?

In the scene at the end, which might be either a staged or an actual conference between two businessmen and a consultant, how can you tell when both of them begin to get interested in what is going on?

What ways do <u>you</u> have, say in a class, of indicating how bored you are? How interested you are? That you're irritated or don't like what's going on?

English 120

COMMUNICATION EXERCISES

TO THE TEACHER:

Following are a series of exercises which might be used to let students experience how they feel and how effectively they communicate non-verbally.

Give these directions:

EXERCISE 1:

Pick a partner and sit on the floor facing your partner. These exercises are to be done non-verbally. Decide which of you will be first. Whichever one of you is first is to communicate non-verbally to her/his partner these five phrases which I will give you. Stay in touch with yourself as you do this, and see how you experience each of these phrases.

"You can't see me."

"You must see me."

"I see you."

"Please see me."

"Don't look at me."

Then switch, and the recipient will become the sender.

Now share with your partner how you felt in communicating each of these phrases. How effectively did you get your message across? How did you feel about trying to communicate without talking? Did your partner receive your messages? Which one was most uncomfortable for you to try and communicate?

EXERCISE2:

Now turn so that you are sitting back to back with your partner and continue your conversation. How does it feel to talk to someone you can't see? What do you notice about the communication process?

EXERCISE 3:

Now I'd like you to be quiet a moment. Think about how you feel right now. How does your body feel? What's your energy level? Now communicate this to your partner with your back and without talking.

Now turn around and face your partner again. See what message your partner received from you. Was it the same as what you sent?

English 120

Communication Exercises Continued

EXERCISE 4:

Each group of two select another group of two that you would like to work with. Your task is to plan, as a group, how you would sell any product or service to the rest of the class or to another group without talking. Your presentation is to be entirely non-verbal. You will have approximately ten minutes to plan your presentation and then you will present it.

The class will try to guess what you are selling and will tell you how successful you were.

English 120

TOP DOG/UNDER DOG EXERCISE #2

TO THE TEACHER:

The purpose of this exercise is to help students gain increased awareness of the Top Dog Under Dog polarity and the ways in which it affects their lives and influences their actions. In addition, the exercise will promote the taking of responsibility for behavior and introduce the idea of "payoff."

Discuss the concept of "payoff" in terms of behavior. All behavior has consequences. A payoff, quite simply, is what we get out of doing something. It is important to realize that not all payoffs are positive; often they can be negative. Often we will behave in a certain way or set up a situation in order to get a Payoff, whether it is positive or negative. Thinking about our behavior in terms of what we get out of it is a new way of looking at behavior. For example, think about: "If I put off my work until the last possible minute, I get to feel like a martyr because I have so much to do in so short a time."

Looking at the TD/UD dynamics in terms of what each aspect gets out of behaving the way it does may be insightful.

Repeat the Top Dog/Under Dog exercise the same way it was done the first time. When students have played both observer and worker, and have given and received feedback, ask them to write a journal entry revolving around these questions:

1. In which role are you most comfortable?

2. What are your payoffs in this role? (There may be several. List and discuss them separately and specifically.)

3. Finish this sentence: "I need to feel _____ in order to _____. Discuss.

English 120

WORKING WITH DREAMS

TO THE TEACHER:

The area of dreams is one to which students can probably relate without difficulty and might provide an area about which students can write comfortably and easily in their journals. Students who normally experience difficulty in generating content may experience success in writing about dreams within the Gestalt framework.

Arrange to show the film, "Philosophy of the Obvious" (Aquarian Productions, approximately 25 minutes) in which Fritz Perls discusses the Gestalt approach to dream work. Again, students may experience difficulty with his accent and with the didactic discussion at the beginning, but should be interested in the demonstration of dream work which follows.

One important Gestalt technique, which can be utilized in writing, is the technique of projection. Perls emphasizes the fact that in Gestalt theory, characters, objects, situations, etc. in a dream are aspects of ourselves which we have disowned and projected or placed onto the world or onto other people. These disowned aspects may be feelings, characteristics, personality traits, etc. We can learn a great deal about ourselves through our projections, especially our projections as they occur in dreams. Projection with awareness can also be useful in other ways.

In discussing this film it is important to stress that the road, the plate, the pot and the bowl and the young man's style in dealing with them in the dream, are all aspects of himself that he has disowned and projected into the various aspects of the dream. Perls also stresses the idea that a dream is an existential message, a statement about our total existence.

Suggest that students may use dreams as journal entries and insist that they use the Gestalt technique in writing down their dreams. Dreams should not be told in the past tense, as a story, but should be written in the first person, present tense. This is most important, as insights may be reached through simply writing a dream in the journal.

If students whish to go further with the technique, they may write dialogues or encounters between various aspects of the dream. For students interested in reading about Gestalt dream work, recommend Gestalt Therapy Verbatim by Fritz Perls, or The Dream Game and Dream Power by Ann Farraday. Dream interpretation "cook books" should be avoided.

English 120

USING PROJECTION IN WRITING

TO THE TEACHER:

Following are two writing exercises involving the use of projection. It is suggested that both exercises be done, and in the order specified, as the second exercise is somewhat more complex than the first one. Both of these will give students a chance to utilize the techniques of projection, develop fully their ideas in writing, and use specific details.

EXERCISE 1

Use a deck of Tarot cards, preferably the Rider or Waite deck or the Aquarian Tarot. Spread out all the cards on a table or desk, face up. Allow students to come and choose a card to which they feel attracted. Suggest that they give themselves a chance to look at and experience all the cards before selecting one.

Then ask them to write a paper in which they project themselves into the images on the card and describe themselves as the figures or images on the card. They may also describe how they feel as the card. Ask that they use the title of the card as the title for the paper.

This will take most, if not all, of one class period. The exercise can also be done orally and students can write a reaction paper.

(If you are interested in learning more about Tarot, The Tarot by Alfred Douglas or Mastering the Tarot by Eden Cray are recommended.)

EXERCISE 2

Ask students to bring an object which has meaning for them to class. They are then to describe themselves in as much detail as possible, as if they were the object. When they have completed the description, ask them to add to the description an answer to this question: "In what specific ways is this description like you? Discuss."

This exercise can also be done orally and will take most or all of a fifty-minute class period.

English 120

HOW OBSERVANT ARE YOU, ANYWAY?

Answer the following questions to the best of your ability, right now. Don't skip any of the questions, even if you have to guess. Verify your answers to the questions and record them on the back of the sheet.

1. Does your house door swing outward or inward?

2. What is immediately to your right as you walk through the door of your bedroom?

3. Does your father (mother, or brother or sister) eat one food at a time at dinner, or does s/he eat them all together? (That is, would s/he eat all his/her meat before the potatoes, or would s/he eat a bite of meat and then a bite of potato, etc.?)

4. What is the difference between men's shirts and women's shirts, other than size?

5. Which arm do you put through a shirt sleeve first? How about legs into pants?

6. When you sit with your arms crossed across your chest, is your right arm over your left arm, or vice versa? Do all right handed (left-handed) people do it that way?

7. Which shoe do you put on first in the morning when you dress? Do you always do it that way?

8. Who in your family is the slowest eater?

9. Which color is your mother least likely to wear?

10. Is the taste of food more distinct when it is hot or when it is cold?

From: Hawley, Robert C., Sidney B. Simon, and D. D. Britton, Composition For Personal Growth. New York: Hart Publishing Company, 1973.

English 120

I SEE/I IMAGINE

TO THE TEACHER:

The purpose of this exercise is to give students practice in being specific about their observations and practice in distinguishing between observation and fantasy. It may be used in conjunction with the fantasy/observation picture exercise.

Students may work with a partner on this exercise, or you may have the entire class involved. Students are less likely to become bored with the latter alternative. Have the class sit in a circle, so that everyone can see everyone else.

Go around the circle once, and have everybody finish the sentence, "Now I am aware of. . ." with a specific behavior that he observes in someone else in the circle. For example, "Now I am aware of Sara's popping gum," or "Now I am aware that Jim is shaking his foot."

As soon as the game has gone around the circle once, add another element. This time ask for a volunteer to start. First, participants are to mention as specific behavior they note, as before. In addition, this time they are to add their fantasy about what the behavior signifies. For example, "Now I am aware that Frank has his head on his hand, and my fantasy is that he doesn't feel well." "Now I am aware that Betsy is playing with a curl of hair, and my fantasy is that she is nervous." The student named may then confirm or deny the accuracy of the fantasy and then become the next participant.

It is less important that the fantasy be accurate or inaccurate than that the student realize that interpretations of behavior are his or her <u>fantasies</u> and not observations.

After playing this game, you may want to discuss with students examples of experiences in interpreting someone else's behavior that caused discomfort. You may want to use student interpretation of your behavior as a starting point for this discussion and then move on to other areas such as relationships with boy friends or girl friends or parents.

English 120

OBSERVATION AND FANTASY

ASSIGNMENT:

Take yourself to a place where you will have an opportunity to observe one person for a period of time, say fifteen or twenty minutes. Such places might be a spot on campus, a bus stop, the Student Union, the Library, a restaurant, a store, etc. Observe this person for a few minutes. Then write a description of him or her. Limit yourself in this description to what you actually <u>see</u>, like physical features, dress, etc. Watch the person's actions for a while and begin to add your fantasies of how the person is feeling or imagine reasons for their actions. Examples: I see the girl glance at her watch and I <u>imagine</u> she is waiting for someone. I see the woman rub her forehead and I <u>imagine</u> that she is tired. I see the guy bounce his foot up and down and I <u>imagine</u> that he is nervous. Write a paragraph about your observations/fantasies and see if you can begin to differentiate between what is observation and what is fantasy.

English 120

WAYS TO Reduce Awareness or to Produce Estrangement from Experience or to Maintain the Status Quo (Avoid responsibility, Remain a Child)

1. Ask questions (especially "why?")
2. Flatter your hearer
3. Blame your parents, fate, the system, etc.
4. Use "it", "we", "group" language
5. Play a role
6. Play stupid
7. Play helpless
8. Intellectualize
9. Use technical terms
10. Use vague terms
11. Should yourself
12. Justify
13. Rationalize
14. Project
15. Argue
16. Be clever
17. Gossip
18. Joke
19. Judge (good/bad, right/wrong, competent/incompetent)
20. Try too hard
21. Engage in excessive routine
22. Get "too busy" to continue to be aware of yourself
23. Avoid taking up "too much" of the group's time
24. Use a flat voice
25. Don't move your body
26. Look away from your hearer
27. Don't breath fully
28. Dwell in the future
29. Dwell in the past
30. Manipulate
31. Dwell on your "guilt" or "selfishness"
32. Play fitting games
33. Rehearse
34. Withdraw
35. Be sick
36. Fall asleep
37. Interpret someone else
38. Don't listen
39. Always avoid conflict, anger, fear, disgust
40. Never finish a situation
41. Use "can't" a lot
42. Try to please the therapist
43. Forget your dreams
44. Dwell in Maya
45. Perceive yourself as a helpless victim of circumstance
46. Faithfully follow the rules of an outside authority without question
47. Defy, sabotage, be a martyr, etc., as a way of life

English 120

TRIP THROUGH THE BODY AND GROUNDING

TO THE TEACHER:

The more in touch with, aware of, and grounded in the body the student is, the more able s/he seems to become to produce concreteness and specificity in writing, especially on an experiential level. The purpose of this exercise is to reinforce the idea of body awareness by repeating the trip through the body, focusing upon the legs as a base of contact with the ground.

Have the students sit in a circle, and request tht they all sit in chairs, as they will be asked to stand up at some point in the exercise. Then read the instruciions at a leisurely pace, allowing time for the students to follow the directions and experience fully different aspects of the exercise. Pauses will be indicated by a /.

I'd like you to sit in your chair with your spine straight/ Find a comfortable position so that you don't have to work to hold any part of your body in position/ Be aware of the fact that it takes more effort to cross your legs and ankles than it does to just leave your feet flat on the floor/ Now I'd like you to focus on your breathing/ Don't change it/ Simply pay attention to it/ See how far you let the air go before you stop it/ Be aware of the temperature of the air as you breathe it in/ Be aware of the warmer air as you breathe it out/ And now I'd like you to take a deep breath/ and hold it/ and let it out slowly/ Now go back to your normal breathing pattern/ And if your eyes are open, see if you are willing to let them shut gently/

Now I'd like you to take three deep breaths in a row, and I'll count them for you/ Let's take the first one/ and hold it/ and let it out slowly/ Now let's take the second one/ and hold it/ and let it out slowly/ And now the third one/ and hold it/ and let it out slowly/ And now go back to your normal breathing pattern/

Now, focus your awareness on your body as a whole/ See if there are any places in your body where you feel pain or tension/ Now I'd like you to imagine that you can exhale through those places in your body that are painful or tense, and as you exhale, you can breathe away the tension and pain/ Find those places now, and focus your awareness on them/ Now take a deep breath, and breathe away the tension/ Take another deep breath and breathe away toxicity/ Take another breath and get rid of all the negative energy that is in those parts of your body/

Now imagine that your entire body is surrounded by light/ Feel that light permeate every cell of your body/ See if you can feel it in contact with your skin/ your feet/ your legs/ the trunk of your body/ your arms and hands/ your neck and throat/ your head/ Now see if you can tell what color the light is/ Is it the same color all over and

English 120

TRIP THROUGH THE BODY AND GROUNDING Continued

through your body, or are there different colors?/ Now imagine, whatever color or colors are surrounding your body, that the light is turning to green/ Imagine the purest, brightest, clearest green light you can think of filling, surrounding, enclosing, and protecting your entire body/ See if you can let the green light fill the trunk of your body, where your vital organs are/ Imagine that this light is cleansing and purifying any imbalance in your body, for green is often associated with healing/ See if you can feel the green light working all through your body/ See how it feels/ Now change the color of the light to orange, and imagine the purest, clearest shade of orange you can/ Imagine that orange is associated with energy and that your body is being charged and filled with a strong, pure, steady energy, so you can do all the things that you need to do/

Now imagine that you are surrounded by a pure, white light/ Now, slowly and carefully stand up beside your chair, keeping the white light around you/ As you stand, gradually begin to focus your awareness on your feet and legs/ See how they feel/ Do you feel them?/ Move your awareness slowly up and down both legs/ See what feelings and sensations are present/ Are there any places in your legs where you have no feeling? / Now bend your knees slightly and bounce a little on your legs with knees bent/ See how your legs feel/ Now stand quietly again and focus your awareness on your feet/ See if you can feel the bottoms of your feet in contact with the ground/ Begin to think of the ground as your support and of your feet and legs as your contact with the ground/ See if you can experience the ground under as your support/ Experiment with the idea of the ground holding you up/ Once again, bend your knees a bit and bounce a little on your legs/ Continue to imagine that relationship between you and the ground--the ground holding you up and supporting you and your feet and legs making contact with the ground/

And now, sit or stand, whichever feels most comfortable to you, and begin to think about coming back to this room/ Take your time, and at your own pace, bring yourself slowly and gently back to this room/ Whenever you feel ready, open your eyes/ After your eyes are open and you feel yourself back here, I'd like you to get up and walk around the room slowly and without talking/ As you walk, focus your attention on your feet and legs and the ground upon which you are walking/ Take some time and really let yourself experience yourself in contact with the ground/ Whenever you feel ready, return to your seat/

This exercise will take thirty to forty minutes, so the time for processing will be brief. An important question to ask will be to find out who found spots in their legs that were numb and had no feeling. Other questions might deal with the extent to which they were able to experience the ground and themselves in contact with it, the colors they discovered around their bodies, what they experienced with each of the colors you suggested.

English 120

TRIP THROUGH THE BODY AND GROUNDING Continued

The journal assignment should be a description of their experience with this exercise, focusing on the questions above.

English 120

FANTASY FOR WRITING DESCRIPTION

TO THE TEACHER:

The purpose of this exercise is to give the students an experiential base for writing description and to make them aware of possibilities for making fantasy life nourishing.

This fantasy exercise is taken from Passages: A Guide for Pilgrims of the Mind by Marianne S. Andersen and Louis M. Savary (Harper and Row, 1973).

Once again, read the exercise at a leisurely pace, allowing time for students to follow the instructions and experience fully the various aspects of their fantasy. Pauses will again be indicated by a /.

Ask the students to move their chairs into a circle, which promotes a feeling of belonging to a group and allows the teacher to see almost everyone simultaneously. Those who wish to do so may be allowed to sit or lie on the floor. Lights should be off.

In this exercise you are going to create a haven for yourself--a place where you may go at will for rest and for nourishment. See if you are willing to follow the suggestions I am about to make/

Begin by focusing on your breathing, as we did before/ Don't change it; just observe it/ See how far you let the air go before you stop it/ Let yourself experience the cool air that you inhale and the warmer air that you exhale/ See what happens in between breaths/ And now I'd like you to take a deep breath and hold it/ and let it out slowly/ And just go back to your normal breathing pattern/

And now, if your eyes are still open, let them close gently and stay in touch with your breathing/ Now I'd like you to take three deep breaths in a row and I'll count them for you/ Let's take the first one and hold it/ and let it out slowly/ And now the second one and hold it/ and let it out slowly/ Now take the third one and hold it/ and let it out slowly/ And go back to your normal breathing pattern/

Now I'd like you to imagine that you're walking down a hallway to a room/ This room is your room/ No one else is allowed in your room/ It's your private place to go and be by yourself and do whatever you like; it's your haven/ All is peaceful and relaxing in your room/ Imagine now that you're coming to the door of your room, that it's right in front of you/ Look at the door/ Observe it and see what it looks like/ Only you can open that door/ Now open the door slowly and step into your room/ Somewhere in the room is a chair, a big comfortable chair that fits your body perfectly/ Walk across the room to your chair, and as you walk, notice what's on the floor/ Now sit

English 120

ROOM FANTASY Continued

down in your chair and look around you/ Notice how the walls are/ Is there anything on them/ See how large or how small your room feels/ Be aware of how much light there is in the room and where it comes from/ Are there windows?/ What are they like?/ Focus your attention on the things you have put around your room to make it yours/ What do they look like?/ Notice the colors that are in your room? Where are they and what are they?/ Look again around your room/ Let yourself experience the feeling of peace and solitude that is there/ Experience yourself sitting in your chair, totally comfortable, and feel the chair support you/ Remember that you can come here as often as you want to and nobody can disturb you/ This is your private place/ See how you feel sitting here/

And now I'd like you to begin to think about coming back to this room now/ In your own time and at your own pace, bring yourself slowly and gently back to this room where we all are sitting/ Whenever you feel ready, open your eyes/ You might want to move and stretch a bit/ Now use your eyes and look around this room and see what you see/

Whenever the students seem fully focused in the here and now and back in the room with you, turn the lights on. This fantasy can take from twenty to thirty minutes, so allow the remaining class time for writing. The writing assignment should be as follows:

Write a description of your fantasy room in your journal. Describe it fully, using as many specific details as you can, so that someone who didn't see it could visualize it from your description.

English 120

EXPLANATION OF A PROCESS

TO THE TEACHER:

This exercise will take several class periods and is designed to show students the importance of using clear and specific development and sufficient detail in describing a process.

Divide the class into groups of four or five. Then give the assignment as follows:

Your task as a group is to select and describe in specific detail a simple process. I will give you an outline to follow in writing a process paper. You are to write the paper as a group, and all of you should have a copy of it in your journals. Your group must select a process which you can demonstrate here in the classroom. Find a way for everyone in your group to participate in the demonstration of this process.

One member of your group will read the paper you have written describing the process. In demonstrating the process, your group may follow only the directions which you have written in your paper, so be careful not to leave anything out. You must also provide any materials or supplies that are necessary in forming your process.

Examples of processes which have been demonstrated before are opening a door, threading a needle, sewing on a button, frosting a cake, popping pop corn, wrapping a package, making tuna salad, rolling up hair, etc.

It is wise to allot at least one full class period for students to work together in writing the paper and planning the presentation. It will probably take at least two class periods for the presentations.

English 120

HOW TO MAKE OR DO SOMETHING
(Process)

I. Introduction

A. The thing to be made or done (topic sentence)

B. The materials needed

C. The tools & skills needed

II. Body

A. First step in the operation

B. Second step

C. Third Step

D. Cautions to be observed

(Note: The important thing is to give enough information to analyse the process, but not to give so many details that you confuse.)

III. Conclusion

A. The finished product

B. Its use, value, etc.

English 120

VALUE CLARIFICATION AND CONCENSUS DECISION MAKING

TO THE TEACHER:

The purpose of this exercise is to let students begin to get in touch with their values and to provide experience in consensus decision-making.

First, tell students "The Alligator River Story" (below). It may be helpful to illustrate the story with a drawing on the board. The story goes as follows:

Sue is a twenty-year-old girl who lives with her mother, Alice, on one side of a river. The river is very big and very swift and full of hungry alligators. Sue goes across the river on a bridge every day to see her boy friend, Bob. One night there is a terrible storm and the bridge is washed away. The next morning Sue is pacing distractedly up and down the river bank, wondering how she is going to get across to see Bob, when she meets a sailor named Sinbad. It so happens that Sinbad has a boat and he agrees to take Sue across the river to see Bob--on one condition--she must sleep with him the night before they go. Sue says she will think about it and goes home to talk it over with her mother. Alice listens and then says, "You must make your own decision. You're a big girl now." Sue goes back and tells Sinbad that she has decided to accept his offer.

The next morning Sinbad takes Sue across the river and lets her off. She runs happily up to Bob's front door. Bob, needless to say, is very surprised to see her and asks how she managed to get across the river. When Sue tells him, he loses his temper, and stalks off in a rage. Sue wanders outside, very unhappy, and meets Larry, who asks her why she is crying. She tells him the whole story and he becomes very indignant. Just then he spies Bob and goes over and begins fighting with Bob. Sue sits on a rock and watches the fight with a smile on her face.

The End

The cast of characters in order of appearance is Sue, Alice, Bob, Sinbad, and Larry. Rank order these characters in the order in which you like them.

THEN:

Divide the class into small groups of four or five and hand out Rules for Consensus Decision-making. Go over the rules, and be certain that everyone understands. The task for the small groups is to arrive at a group ranking of the characters in the story in a twenty-minute time period.

English 120

VALUE CLARIFICATION AND CONCENSUS DECISION MAKING Continued

Ask each group to put its rank ordering on the board and explain how they arrived at their decision. Ask them to discuss both the process they used and their reasons for ranking the characters in the order they did.

Suggest that each student write a journal entry in which they discuss the reasons for the individual rank-ordering and their feelings about the group consensus process.

English 120

RULES FOR CONCENSUS--DECISION MAKING

Instructions

This is an exercise in group decision-making. Your group is to employ the method of Group Consensus in reaching its decision. Consensus is difficult to reach. Here are some guidelines to use in reaching consensus.

1. Appoint no leader.
2. Argue your case as logically as possible, but be open to others' logic also.
3. Avoid changing your mind only in order to reach agreement and avoid conflict. Support only solutions with which you are able to agree somewhat, at least.
4. Avoid "conflict-reducing" techniques such as majority vote, averaging, or trading in reaching decisions.
5. View differences of opinion as helpful, rather than as a hindrance, in decision making.
6. The final product is considered a consensus if all group members can "live with" the final ranking. It is not necessary to have 100% agreement on ranking.

English 120

THINK ABOUT. . . . .

The Gestalt Prayer

I do my thing, and you do your thing.
I am not in this world to live up to your expectations
And you are not in this world to live up to mine.
You are you and I am I.
And if by chance we find each other, it's beautiful.
If not, it can't be helped.

Many people dedicate their lives to actualize a concept of what they should be like, rather than to actualize themselves. This difference between self-actualizing and self-image actualizing is very important. Most people live only for their image. Where some people have a self, most people have a void, because they are so busy projecting themselves as this or that. This is again the curse of the ideal. The curse that you should not be what you are. (p. 19)

Intuition is the intelligence of the organism. Intelligence is the whole, and intellect is the whore intelligence--the computer, the fitting game: If this is so, then this is so--all this figuring out by which many people replace seeing and hearing what's going on. Because if you are busy with your computer, your energy goes into your thinking and you don't see and hear any more. (p. 22)

I consider that the basic personality in our time is a neurotic personality. This is a preconceived idea of mine, because I believe we are living in an insane society and that you only have the choice either to participate in this collective psychosis or to take risks and become healthy and perhaps also crucified. (p. 30)

The neurotic is a person who does not see the obvious. (p. 38)

Nobody really wants to get through the impasse that will grant. . . development. We'd rather maintain the status quo: rather keep in the status quo of a mediocre marriage, mediocre mentality, mediocre aliveness, than to go through that impasse. Very few people go into therapy to be cured, but rather to improve their neurosis. (p. 39)

To suffer one's death and to be reborn is not easy. (Frontespiece)

From: Perls, Frederick S., Gestalt Therapy Verbatim. Lafayette, California: Real People Press, 1969.

English 120

"PLAYING AROUND" WITH VALUES

TO THE TEACHER:

The purpose of this exercise is to help students recognize the connection which may exist between value judgments and Top Dog tapes. It will also give students practice in writing short, concise answers to questions.

The exercise will take a full class period. The first half of the class will be taken up while students follow the directions for individual work. They should then be allowed to choose groups of three or four to work with on the remainder of the exercise.

If they finish early, some general processing and checking of responses to the questions on the first part might be interesting.

English 120

"PLAYING AROUND" WITH VALUES

This exercise will follow the exercise you just did on the "Alligator River" story, which gave you some experience in group decision-making, and also may have put you in touch with some of your values.

1. Write "should" or "shouldn't" statements for each of the characters in the Alligator River story, using your individual ranking. (EX: Sue shouldn't have slept with Sinbad. Sue shouldn't have laughed at the end, etc.)

2. Using the statements for #1 above, expand your statements to the level of "everybody" or "people" or "parents." (EX: Parents should tell their children right from wrong. Girls shouldn't sleep around. People shouldn't tell everything they do, etc.)

3. Now use your value statements from #2. This time write them as if they were being said by your Top Dog to your Under Dog. Write a short TD/UD dialogue in which your TD gives you as your UD every one of your value statements as a "should" or a "shouldn't." Listen as your Under Dog and write a brief response. Use the other side of the page if you need to.

English 120

PLAYING AROUND WITH VALUES Continued

How do you react to having these statements laid on you by Top Dog? Do you agree?

4. Go back through your journal and find some of the "should" statements that emerged in your previous TD/UD dialogues. Write three or four of them here.

One of the fundamentals in Gestalt is "Do unto others what you do unto yourself." Experiment in your small group with some of your Top Dog statements. Tell your group that they should or should not do some of the things your TD has told you. Repeat two or three of your TD statements to individual group members, using their names and looking at them. How do you feel? Share this with your group members. Now use some of your value statements from #3 and do the same thing. How does this feel? Do you believe yourself as you make these statements to your group members? Find out if they believe you. How convincing are you?

Experiment #2

After your group members have laid their "should's" on you, look at them and say, "I am not in this world to live up to your expectations." How does it feel? Do you believe yourself? Does your Top Dog believe you?

English 120

THE IMPORTANCE OF LANGUAGE

TO THE TEACHER:

This exercise promotes the taking of responsibility for behavior and lets students experience the way in which language can be a key to being active or passive.

The exercise will take a full class period. The first part of the period will be used by students to complete the individual part of the exercise. They should then be grouped in small groups of three or four, so that all will have a chance to participate.

If the groups finish sharing early and there is time, use the questions on the exercise for total group processing.

English 120

THE IMPORTANCE OF LANGUAGE

Language makes a difference in the acceptance of responsibility for one's behavior and in the awareness of what's going on. Talk is cheap; what really tells the tale is behavior, that is, what one actually does, despite what is said. This exercise is an experiment in making language more descriptive of behavior.

For each of the following phrases, think of some examples in your own life that apply. Then complete each phrase with examples from your own experience that are real. Repeat the entire phrase with each example, as: I have to study.

I have to:

I can't:

I need:

I'm afraid to:

English 120

THE IMPORTANCE OF LANGUAGE Continued

Alternate in your group with other members and share what you have written for each phrase. Again, say the entire phrase each time. Get in touch with your feelings as you say each one. How do you feel when you say:

I have to?

I can't?

I need?

I'm afraid to?

Share these feelings with your group members. How do they experience you?

NOW

Repeat your phrases again, alternating with your group members. Make the following changes:

Instead of "I have to. . .", say "I choose to. . ."

Instead of "I can't. . .", say "I won't. . ."

Instead of "I need. . .", say "I want. . ."

Instead of "I'm afraid to. . .", say "I'd like to. . ."

Once again, tune into yourself as you say each phrase and repeat the entire phrase. How do you feel when you say

I choose to instead of I have to?

I won't instead of I can't?

I want instead of I need?

I'd like to instead of I'm afraid to?

Share your feelings with your group members. How do they experience you? How do you experience yourself? Whcih of the two do you prefer to say in each set of phrases?

English 120

ROLES

For various reasons and for different payoffs, most people play a large number of roles in the course of daily living and interacting with people. Some of these roles we choose to play because we get strokes, or recognition, or even love for playing them. Other roles we may choose to play because it is practical to do so, or because we feel the situation demands it. Still other roles we may choose to play because we feel we are forced into playing them. The purpose of this exercise is to help you become aware of some of the roles you choose to play and evaluate them.

List six or seven of the roles you play regularly. Examples might be student, son or daughter, boyfriend or girlfriend, friend, good little girl, tough guy, spoiled kid, dumb, helpless, helpful, employee, goof off, salt of the earth, etc., etc.

Select one role that is forground for you and that you would like to look at. Write a paragraph in which you:

a. Describe the role in detail, listing situations in which you play this role

b. Describe some of the strategies you use (i. e.: I smile a lot, I open my eyes wide and look innocent, I refuse to look at the person I'm talking to, etc.)

c. Describe how you feel when you play the role

d. List some of the payoffs you get for playing this particular role.

Would you like to give up this role? What would make it possible? What prevents you?

English 120

GIVING UP ROLES

TO THE TEACHER:

This exercise is to be done as a follow-up to the writing assignment on roles and will probably take most or all of a fifty-minute class period. The purpose of the exercise is to provoke students to think about the roles they play, the payoffs they get from these roles, and their willingness or lack of willingness to give up any of these roles.

Cut up paper until you have enough small (2 x 2) slips of paper to give each student seven slips of paper. On each slip of paper the student is to write a label for a role s/he plays. They may use the roles they labeled on the writing assignment on roles. Once they have written the labels of the roles on the slips, they are to put them in priority order, putting the least important role first and moving to the most important role last. Once this is done, divide the class into small groups of four or five.

The procedure to follow within the groups is thus: Someone in the group will start by placing one of his/her slips in the center of the group, face up. The person should then name the role, describe the payoffs he/she gets from playing that role, and indicate what makes him/her now willing to give up that role. The next person in the group then does the same thing, and so on. The giving up of roles continues around the group until someone reaches a role s/he is <u>not</u> willing to give up. S/he should give the label of the role, indicate what the payoffs are, and simply state an awareness that s/he is not willing to give up that role. The slip of paper with the label is then retained by that player. Most of the participants will reach a point at which they are not willing to give up any more roles, and this is perfectly acceptable. The purpose of the game is to create an awareness of roles, priorities, and payoffs.

As different members of the groups are giving up or retaining their roles, other group members may wish to comment. This is also acceptable within certain parameters. They may ask for clarification, "I didn't understand your payoffs for that role," <u>not</u> "Why do you want to give that up?" They may share their own feelings regarding someone else's role, "I do that, too, and I'm afraid to stop." They may <u>not</u> judge, analyse, interpret, etc.

Students may write a reaction to the exercise or discuss roles they are not willing to give up.

English 120

RESENTMENTS AND APPRECIATIONS

TO THE TEACHER:

The purpose of this exercise is to allow the students to project with awareness and experiment with a Gestalt technique. According to Fritz Perls, one thing that keeps us living in the past is unfinished business or incomplete gestalts with people we have known. Alive or dead, one way we hang on to people in our past is with unexpressed resentments and unexpressed appreciations.

Anger and resentment are generally frowned upon in our society; we are not encouraged to express them. Anger is often one of the most difficult and threatening feelings for us to deal with. This exercise offers students an opportunity to experiment with anger and resentment in a safe atmosphere, and by talking to an empty chair rather than to a real person. Students will get an opportunity to experience their own styles of expressing resentment and appreciation.

Students will work with a partner in the three chair set-up used in the TD/UD experiment used previously. One is to be observer and one is to be the worker, and then they are to exchange roles.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE WORKER:

Sit, facing the empty chair. Select a person, alive or dead, in your life or out of it, to whom you would like to express resentments. Give yourself a few moments to think about that person, and imagine him/her sitting in the chair opposite you. The first thing to be aware of is how willing you are to see that person; how much difficulty do you have in visualizing him/her? Wait until you can really see that person and then begin with resentments. Be very specific in finishing the sentence, "I resent you for. . ." Example, "I resent you for criticising the way I dress. I resent you for never saying anything positive to me. I resent you for always being sick." Don't worry about whether your resentments are justified or logical. Feelings are not always logical. Stay in touch with yourself and your body as you express both resentments and appreciations. When you feel finished with resentments, begin expressing appreciations. Example, "I appreciate you for buying me nice clothes." You may switch chairs and respond as the other person either after expressing resentments or after finishing both resentments and appreciations. As the other person, be aware of how much you are willing to listen and what you remember from the other chair. Listen very carefully to your responses as the other person. It is not necessary to name that person.

In your journal, describe your style of expressing anger. Did you believe what you were saying as you expressed both resentments and appreciation? How comfortable were you in expressing resentment? Appreciation? You may also want to utilize the feedback you get from your partner.

English 120

INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE OBSERVER:

Your task is much the same as it was for the TD/UD experiment. Observe your partner's facial expressions, body gestures, tone of voice, and strength as s/he expresses resentment and appreciation, and responds as the other person. Be careful to avoid analysing and interpreting as you share your observations with your partner.

English 120

NUCLEAR WAR

TO THE TEACHER:

The purpose of this exercise is to give students practice in writing a paper in which they will support an opinion with facts ahd specific details in order to convince. The second part of the exercise will allow them to see how successful they have been in their attempt to convince, and give them additional experience in consensus decision-making.

Have students number off one through eight. Then pass out "The Nuclear War" handout. The number the student got in the count-off is the number of the character s/he is to pretend to be. Each student is to write at least one fully-developed paragraph the point of which is to convince others in the group he will be in that the character s/he is portraying should be one of the survivors. S/he is to use all of the information that is on the sheet, but may add anything else s/he wants to add in order to make his/her position more convincing. Students should also receive the outline which they may use as a guide in writing the paper.

Writing the paper and organizing the students into groups will take one class period. The second part of the exercise should take most or all of another class period.

In the second part of the exercise, students are each to read their papers to the group. Based on the paper they read, the group will then decide, using the concensus decision-making process, who the survivors will be.

At the end of the exercise, each group should appoint a spokesman who will explain to the class the chosen survivors from his/her group and the rationale for choosing each person.

Some processing should be done to see if there are any who took the exercise personally, or if there is any other unfinished business. It might also be wise to find out if any were not chosen as survivors because the paper stating their case was under-developed. It might be interesting to see who added most to the given information in writing his/her paper.

English 120

EXPLANATION OF AN IDEA, THEORY, BELIEF

I. Introduction

A. Brief statement of the idea

B. Brief explanation of the idea (if necessary)

II. Body (The topic sentence or thesis statement is valid because. . .)

A. Development by:

1. Specific detail

2. Example

3. Reasons

4. Analogy or extended example

5. Comparison and contrast

6. Explanation of a process

7. Definition

B. Cautions

1. Offer specific details, examples, reasons, etc., and NOT generalizations

2. Satisfactorily answer the reader's question: What do you mean? or Why do you think so?

III. Conclusion: Brief summarizing statements

English 120

THE NUCLEAR WAR

The United States has been involved in a nuclear war. Eight people find themselves in a shelter capable of supporting only five people for the year of necessary confinement. There are no other known shelters which survived the attack. Your problem is to evict three people so that the remaining five may survive. After your group has come to a decision, place a plus (+) in front of the names of those individuals the group has decided may live in the shelter and a zero (0) in front of the names of those the group has decided to evict.

___ 1. Mrs. Wright: White, Protestant, fair health, college education, housewife, in shock over the loss of her family.

___ 2. Dr. Lopez: General practitioner, Spanish American, Catholic, extremely poor health.

___ 3. Miss Candy: Black Muslim, fair health, hooked on drugs, registered nurse.

___ 4. Miss Nancy: Oriental American, Hindu, good health.

___ 5. Mr. Lynn: White, Protestant, good health, trade school education, just released from prison.

___ 6. Mr. Scott: Black, atheist, excellent health, college professor in philosophy, communist sympathizer.

___ 7. Miss Red: White, no religion, good health, high school graduate, prostitute, pregnant.

___ 8. Father Tom: White, Catholic, good health, liberal in the church, believes in marriage for priests.

English 120

THE ACID TEST FOR DESCRIPTION

TO THE TEACHER:

This exercise can be used in conjunction with the sensory awareness exercises or when you are focusing on the writing of description. It will demonstrate to students the practical importance of making a descriptive paragraph specific and concrete.

Have students bring a small object to class. Take all the objects and put them in a box which has high enough sides that the students cannot see what is in the box. Ask the students to put on blindfolds. Then let each student take an object from the box and allow them a few minutes to explore the object and get all the descriptive details possible from holding, smelling, tasting, dropping, etc. the object. Then take up all the objects.

Give the students a few minutes to write a brief descriptive paragraph about the object they held. Tell them to use as many details as possible and describe the object as completely as possible.

For the next part of the exercise you may choose to keep the class together or divide them into smaller groups. Each student will read aloud his/her descriptive paragraph and the rest of the class or group will attempt to identify the object and pick it out from among the group of objects you have placed on a desk or table where all may see them.

If time remains, you may want to work on improving the organization of the details or the writing of introductory sentences.

English 120

USE OF THE COMPOSITION RATING SHEET

TO THE TEACHER:

The Composition Rating Sheet may be used in a variety of ways throughout the course.

It can be handed out to students for them to use as a guide in preparing papers.

You may ask them to select a journal entry and have you rate it on the CRS. You may also choose to have them select an entry and rate themselves on the CRS. The students might also be asked to select a partner to work with and a journal entry they might not mind having someone else read and rate each other on the CRS.

There are doubtless several ways in which the CRS can be utilized.

English 120 NAME _____

COMPOSITION RATING SHEET

yes	no		
____	____	1.	Can you tell easily what the general subject of the paper is?
____	____	2.	Does the paper have one central idea, point, or purpose?
____	____	3.	Is the central idea, point, or purpose clearly stated?
____	____	4.	Can you tell what the author's attitude is toward the subject?
____	____	5.	Is the subject properly restricted so that it can be handled in a paper of this length?
____	____	6.	Is each main point in the paper discussed long enough to show you what the writer means?
____	____	7.	Does the writer support each major point or idea in the paper with <u>specific</u> (Check those of which you find examples in the paper)

facts ____ details ____ examples ____
anecdotes ____ description ____ statistics ____
reasons ____ reasoning ____ other ____ ?

____	____	8.	In developing his/her ideas, does the writer give you some basis for accepting or believing what s/he is saying?
____	____	9.	Do all the details enlarge upon, add to, or in some way augment the point(s) the author is trying to make?
____	____	10.	Does the paper stay on the same subject throughout?
____	____	11.	Do all the details in each paragraph relate to the main idea of that paragraph?
____	____	12.	Do all the details in each paragraph develop or add to the main idea of that paragraph?
____	____	13.	Do all the paragraphs enlarge upon, explain, or in some way augment the central idea of the paper?
____	____	14.	Does the paper have an introductory sentence or paragraph?
____	____	15.	Does the paper have a concluding sentence or paragraph?
____	____	16.	Is the language of the paper clear and understandable?

English 120

COMPOSITION RATING SHEET CONTINUED

yes	no		
____	____	17.	Is the paper interestingly written?
____	____	18.	Is the paper largely free from careless errors (words omitted, slang, "a lot" spelled "alot," usage of "+" for "and," etc.)?
____	____	19.	Can you state in one sentence what the author has communicated to you in this paper?
____	____	20.	Statement of general impression communicated by the paper: _____

English 120

INCOMPLETE SENTENCE

Complete the following sentences as rapidly as you can.

Write the first thought or feeling that comes to your mind. Do not skip any.

1. I feel that my father _____
2. When the odds are against me, _____
3. I always wanted to _____
4. If I were in charge, _____
5. To me, the future looks _____
6. The people over me _____
7. I am afraid of _____
8. I feel that a real friend _____
9. When I was a child, _____
10. My idea of a perfect person is _____
11. When I see man and woman together _____
12. Compared with most families, mine _____
13. My lover _____
14. I believe I have the ability to _____
15. I look forward to _____
16. In school, my teachers _____
17. People don't know I feel _____
18. My feeling about married life is _____
19. My family treats me like _____
20. I don't like people who _____
21. My mother and I _____

English 120

INCOMPLETE SENTENCE CONTINUED

22. My greatest mistake was _____
23. I wish my spouse _____
24. My greatest weakness is _____
25. My secret ambition in life is _____
26. My dream is _____
27. I wish I could lose the fear of _____
28. The people I like best _____
29. If I were young again, _____
30. I believe most women _____
31. If I had sex relations, _____
32. Most families I know _____
33. I like working with people who _____
34. I think most parents _____
35. When I was younger, I felt guilty about _____
36. My sex life _____
37. When luck turns against me, _____
38. My children _____
39. What I want most out of life _____
40. People whom I consider my superiors _____
41. My fears sometimes force me to _____
42. When I'm not around, my friends _____
43. My most vivid childhood memory _____
44. God is _____
45. The worst thing I ever did _____

English 120

INCOMPLETE SENTENCE CONTINUED

46. People who work with me _____

47. I could be perfectly happy if _____

48. It seems to me I am best in _____

49. The thing that really upsets me is _____

50. Someday, I will _____

APPENDIX B

English 120

COMMUNICATION ATTITUDES SURVEY

This is an evaluation to see how you <u>feel</u> about communicating. HONESTY is the key.

DIRECTIONS: Find the answer which most applies to you right now. Bubble in your answers on the IBM card. If you have any comments you would like to make, use the separate sheet of paper to let me know where you stand on the following. Make no comments on the card. Thank you.

1. I am willing to express my ideas and feeling verbally to other class members. (1) quite easily (2) fairly (3) somewhat (4) not very (5) really not willing

2. When given a writing assignment, I can think of something to say (1) quite easily (2) easily (3) with some difficulty (4) with great difficulty (5) it's extremely difficult, nearly impossible

3. I am able to think through and prepare an essay with which I am pleased (1) most efficiently (2) fairly efficiently (3) somewhat efficiently (4) with difficulty (5) really not at all, and certainly not with pleasure

4. I feel aware of and can readily accept the attitudes, feelings, needs, and goals of others, no matter how much these may differ from mine (1) completely (2) pretty much (3) somewhat (4) not much (5) hardly at all

5. Because I know I have something worthwhile to write, I desire to communicate in writing about my feelings and ideas (1) very much (2) pretty much (3) somewhat (4) very little (5) hardly at all

6. When I have written something, I am pleased with it (1) almost always (2) usually (3) somewhat (4) once in a while (5) hardly ever

7. I feel proud of my ability to order and structure and develop my essays in a clear, logical manner (1) as a strutting peacock (2) fairly proud (3) somewhat proud (4) not very proud (5) I don't really trust myself to do this

8. When I have written something, I feel it communicates what I want to say (1) almost always (2) usually (3) sometimes (4) seldom (5) hardly ever

9. I am eager to read my essays aloud in class or in groups (1) very eager (2) fairly eager (3) willing, but not eager (4) have to be encouraged (5) nope, too risky!

10. I look forward to taking another English course (1) very much (2) pretty much (3) somewhat (4) not very much (5) not at all, but I guess it's required

English 120

COMMUNICATION ATTITUDES SURVEY CONTINUED

11. Because I know I have something worthwhile to say, I want to express my feelings and ideas verbally (1) enthusiastically (2) pretty much (3) somewhat (4) once in a great while (5) not really

12. In term of my ability to use language, I feel (1) very competent (2) fairly competent (3) somewhat competent (4) not very competent (5) unable

13. I have confidence in my ability to communicate (1) very strong (2) fairly strong (3) somewhat strong (4) very little (5) almost none

14. I want to attend and keep up with group efforts (1) always (2) usually (3) sometimes (4) rarely (5) could care less

15. I enjoy contributing effectively to group discussion (1) always (2) usually (3) somewhat (4) very little (5) hard to do this all

16. I will vocally support another member's right to present his/her view even though that view may be unpopular in our group and I may not have anything specific to add myself (1) always (2) frequently (3) sometimes (4) rarely (5) never risk doing so

17. When appropriate, I will ask to receive constructive feedback from others and risk offering constructive feedback to others (1) always (2) often (3) sometimes (4) rarely (5) never risk doing so

18. I am interested in learning and growing with the group (1) always (2) often (3) sometimes show sparks (4) am often afraid and uninvolved (5) never show such interest because I have nothing to contribute

19. When appropriate, I will take a stand on an issue and defend my position (1) always (2) frequently (3) sometimes (4) seldom (5) rarely trust myself this much

20. I feel free to risk sharing experiences and feelings meaningful to me with class or group members (1) always (2) frequently (3) sometimes (4) rarely (5) have tremendous trouble

21. After lengthly discussion and having defended my view point, I am willing to compromise or alter my point of view (1) always (2) often (3) sometimes (4) rarely (5) never

22. When people disagree with me, I am able to listen to them and feel that their point of view is right for them, and my point of view is right for me (1) always (2) usually (3) sometimes (4) rarely (5) never

English 120

COMMUNICATION ATTITUDES SURVEY CONTINUED

23. I try to draw out quieter members and make them feel at ease (1) always (2) often (3) sometimes (4) rarely (5) I need drawing out!

24. I can communicate comfortably in a variety of ways (1) with ease and enjoyment (2) pretty well (3) with some difficulty (4) with great difficulty (5) feel very limited here

25. My definition of communication has expanded (1) greatly (2) pretty well (3) somewhat (4) very little (5) hardly at all

APPENDIX C

English 120 NAME _____ 171

COMPOSITION RATING SHEET

yes no

____ ____ 1. Can you tell easily what the general subject of the paper is?

____ ____ 2. Does the paper have one central idea, point, or purpose?

____ ____ 3. Is the central idea, point, or purpose clearly stated?

____ ____ 4. Can you tell what the author's attitude is toward the subject?

____ ____ 5. Is the subject properly restricted so that it can be handled in a paper of this length?

____ ____ 6. Is each main point in the paper discussed long enough to show you what the writer means?

____ ____ 7. Does the writer support each major point or idea in the paper with specific (Check those of which you find examples in the paper)

facts ____	details ____	examples ____
anecdotes ____	description ____	statistics ____
reasons ____	reasoning ____	other ____ ?

____ ____ 8. In developing his/her ideas, does the writer give you some basis for accepting or believing what s/he is saying?

____ ____ 9. Do all the details enlarge upon, add to, or in some way augment the point(s) the author is trying to make?

____ ____ 10. Does the paper stay on the same subject throughout?

____ ____ 11. Do all the details in each paragraph relate to the main idea of that paragraph?

____ ____ 12. Do all the details in each paragraph develop or add to the main idea of that paragraph?

____ ____ 13. Do all the paragraphs enlarge upon, explain, or in some way augment the central idea of the paper?

____ ____ 14. Does the paper have an introductory sentence or paragraph?

____ ____ 15. Does the paper have a concluding sentence or paragraph?

____ ____ 16. Is the language of the paper clear and understandable?

English 120

COMPOSITION RATING SHEET CONTINUED

yes	no		
____	____	17.	Is the paper interestingly written?
____	____	18.	Is the paper largely free from careless errors (words omitted, slang, "a lot" spelled "alot," usage of "+" for "and," etc.)?
____	____	19.	Can you state in one sentence what the author has communicated to you in this paper?
____	____	20.	Statement of general impression communicated by the paper: _____

APPENDIX D

February, 1977

Dear:

I am an Associate Professor of English and Coordinator of the Human Growth Center at Miami-Dade Community College in Miami, Florida, and am completing my final year of work on an Ed. D. degree in Behavioral Sciences from Nova University in Florida. I am currently involved in designing and completing my Major Applied Research Project, which has two purposes. The first is the design and implementation of a confluent approach to the teaching of English Composition utilizing Gestalt Therapy techniques in the teaching of freshman composition. The second is validation of the above curriculum through the use of a panel of judges.

My Major Advisor is Dr. John Roueche of the University of Texas and he strongly recommended you as a possible member of this panel of judges needed in this project. I have almost completed developing the course and would be ready for your assistance in the latter part of March or the early part of April. I would mail you all the materials necessary for your judgments, including the entire curriculum package and a questionnaire to guide your evaluation of the rationale, goals, objectives, and learning activities of the course. This assistance should not require more than an hour of your time.

Would you be willing to be a member of the panel of judges that evaluates the course I have developed? I would greatly appreciate your assistance and cooperation. I have enclosed a self-addressed envelope to facilitate your response. I look forward to hearing from you at your earliest convenience.

Sincerely yours,

Linda Tixier

lst

APPENDIX E

EVALUATION CHECKLIST

FOR

CONFLUENT ENGLISH COMPOSITION COURSE

Directions: Please circle the number which best characterizes your response.

1. Are the goals and objectives of the course appropriate for the first or second-year community college student?

1	2	3	4	5
Not at all appropriate			Extremely appropriate	

2. Are the goals and objectives of the course outline appropriate for a community college course in freshman composition?

1	2	3	4	5
Not at all appropriate			Extremely appropriate	

3. Are the outcomes referred to in the objectives specific and measurable?

1	2	3	4	5
Vague and unmeasurable			Specific and measurable	

4. Is the method of evaluation consistent with the rationale, goals, and objectives of this course?

1	2	3	4	5
No				Yes

5. Is there an effort to make the objectives and learning activities relevant to the student?

1	2	3	4	5
No				Yes

6. Does the course outline attempt to justify the course content to the student?

1	2	3	4	5
No				Yes

7. Do the learning activities effectively integrate cognitive and affective objectives?

1	2	3	4	5
Poor integration			Extremely well integrated	

8. Do the learning activities provide an opportunity for the student to master the writing objectives?

1	2	3	4	5
No				Yes

9. Do the learning activities provide an opportunity for the student to master the affective objectives?

1	2	3	4	5
No				Yes

10. Do the learning activities provide an atmosphere conducive to students' learning how to take risks, experiment, relate to others, and explore new behaviors?

1	2	3	4	5
No				Yes

11. Do the learning activities facilitate active or passive learner roles?

1	2	3	4	5
Passive				Active

12. Is the course structure conducive to the development of a nourishing learning environment for both teachers and students?

1	2	3	4	5
Toxic and unhealthy			Extremely nourishing	

13. Are the instructions for implementing the strategies and facilitating the exercises spelled out clearly enough that someone who had not had special training in Gestalt Therapy could use them?

1	2	3	4	5
No				Yes

14. Is it likely that a student completing this course would undergo a change in attitude toward writing or toward English?

1	2	3	4	5
No				Yes

15. Would a student completing this course satisfactorily have achieved the necessary competencies to enter the next level course at your institution?

1	2	3	4	5
No				Yes

16. From your comparison of the rationale, goals, and objectives with the learning activities, which utilize Gestalt Therapy techniques, is the suitability of this approach to teaching composition at all apparent?

1	2	3	4	5
No				Yes

17. In general, how would you rate the rationale, goals, and objectives for this course?

1	2	3	4	5
Poor				Excellent

18. What is your overall evaluation of the learning activities designed for this course?

1	2	3	4	5
Poor				Excellent

19. Stronger features: _____

_____

_____

_____

20. Weaker features: _____

_____

_____

_____

Please feel free to make any additional comment you would like to make.

Signature: _____

Date: _____

APPENDIX F

EVALUATION CHECKLIST

FOR

CONFLUENT ENGLISH COMPOSITION COURSE

DIRECTIONS: PLEASE CIRCLE THE NUMBER WHICH BEST CHARACTERIZES YOUR RESPONSE

1. Are the goals and objectives of the course appropriate for the first or second-year community college student?

1	2	3	4	5
Not at all appropriate				Extremely appropriate

2. Are the goals and objectives of the course outline appropriate for a community college course in freshman composition?

1	2	3	4	5
Not at all appropriate				Extremely appropriate

3. Are the outcomes referred to in the objectives specific and measurable?

1	2	3	4	5
Vague and unmeasurable				Specific and measurable

4. Is the method of evaluation consistent with the rationale, goals, and objectives of this course?

1	2	3	4	5
No				Yes

5. Is there an effort to make the objectives and learning activities relevant to the student?

1	2	3	4	5
No				Yes

6. Does the course outline attempt to justify the course content to the student?

1	2	3	4	5
No				Yes

7. Do the learning activities effectively integrate cognitive and affective objectives?

(1) 2 3 4 5
Poor integration — Extremely well integrated

8. Do the learning activities provide an opportunity for the student to master the writing objectives?

(1) 2 3 4 5
No — Yes

9. Do the learning activities provide an opportunity for the student to master the affective objectives?

1 2 (3)—(4) 5
No — Yes

10. Do the learning activities provide an atmosphere conducive to students' learning how to take risks, experiment, relate to others, and explore new behaviors?

1 (2)—(3) 4 5
No — Yes

11. Do the learning activities facilitate active or passive learner roles?

1 2 3 (4) 5
Passive — Active

12. Is the course structure conducive to the development of a nourishing learning environment for both teachers and students?

1 (2) 3 4 5
Toxic and unhealthy — Extremely nourishing

13. Are the instructions for implementing the strategies and facilitating the exercises spelled out clearly enough that someone who had not had special training in Gestalt Therapy could use them?

1 2 (3) 4 5
No — Yes

14. Is it likely that a student completing this course would undergo a change in attitude toward writing or toward English?

1 (2)—(3) 4 5
No — Yes

15. Would a student completing this course satisfactorily have achieved the necessary competencies to enter the next level course at your institution?

(1) 2 3 4 5
No Yes

16. From your comparison of the rationale, goals, and objectives with the learning activities, which utilize Gestalt Therapy techniques, is the suitability of this approach to teaching composition at all apparent?

(1) — (2) 3 4 5
No Yes

17. In general, how would you rate the rationale, goals, and objectives for this course?

1 (2) 3 4 5
Poor Excellent

18. What is your overall evaluation of the learning activities designed for this course?

(1) — (2) 3 4 5
Poor Excellent

19. Stronger features: provision for and activities related to encouragement of (1) class/group participation in discussion and (2) expression of thoughts in journal activities

20. Weaker features: lack of instruction related to composition (definitions of terms, examples, criteria for evaluation) and lack of activities or assignments related to cognitive development

Please feel free to make any additional comment you would like to make.
(See enclosed letter.)

Signature: Mary Lou Conlon
Date: April 17, 1977

Mary Lou Conlin
2335 Delamere Drive
Cleveland Heights, Ohio 44106

Phone (216) 321-4772

April 17, 1977

Ms. Linda Tixier
English Department
Miami-Dade Community College
11380 NW 27th Avenue
Miami, Florida 33167

Dear Ms. Tixier:

I have read your learning package based on the application of Gestalt therapy to English composition and found it very interesting. I have also answered, and enclose herewith, your questionnaire about the package. However, I think the questionnaire presents a more negative reaction than I wish to convey about the potential for the package and your approach. Therefore, I have chosen to add this somewhat lengthy commentary as a means of expressing what I hope you will find is, in the long run, constructive criticism of your work.

Let me say, first, a little about what I think is your theoretical basis for the approach. I am assuming that you feel that students are weak in composition skills and/or are unable to express themselves because they (1) have or think they have nothing to say and/or (2) have various personal inhibitions/restrictions that prevent them from expressing whatever thoughts and ideas they do have. Further, I am assuming that you feel the removal of such barriers will result in the improvement of their composition abilities. Based on the expectations and instructional content of the learning package, which includes almost no direct instruction in the specific skills related to composition, I am also assuming that you feel improvement in composition will be evidenced not only in the content of the student's writing but also in the organization and mechanics of that writing. Or, to put it another way, I assume that you subscribe to the theory, either in whole or in part, that through the activities related to awareness, perception, and development or perception of a personal value system, that the student's composition abilities will be at least influenced for the better in terms of organization, content, and mechanics or--to use the old standby terms--unity, coherence, and development.

Second, if I am reading your package and your intentions accurately, the journal and the class activites are meant to attack both (1) and (2) above. Except for some confusion about the use of journal entries as compositions, which I will go into below, I would endorse the journal idea. The class activities may indeed encourage participation and free expression. However, I have some discomfort about what seems to be valuing participation and expression for its own sake, without any criteria for the quality of that participation and expression. Conceivably, the outgoing, gregarious student would be active in the class but might not contribute anything very worthwhile in terms of thoughts or ideas; and the potential Emily Dickinson would suffer

In the class if, indeed, she did not drop the class. I think I am troubled that the class activities are oriented toward only one type of behavior and to valuing that behavior or to seeing it as very strongly correlated with being able to communicate in writing. I am troubled by the absence of concern or lack of provision for the possibly shy or even more introverted person who DOES have something to say and will, even though at great pain, say that in writing when he/she would not dream of saying it in a group. Perhaps I am missing something in my translation, but I feel it bears thinking about--especially if we are to embrace Peris' prayer and think about it in relation to student differences--both in personality and in writing abilities.

On the more specific side, let me raise some questions about Goal 1. Where are the "essay" assignments? As I read through the package, I found mainly suggestions and/or assignments for various descriptions which were, in many cases, to be journal entries. In the latter part of the package, there are two paragraph length assignments: one related to role, the other to the nuclear war. The process paper is a group activity, and the student is not asked to produce such a paper of his/her own. The journal entries may be turned in as composition assignments, according to the grade sheet. But if the journal entries are meant to encourage free thinking and free writing--without the inhibitions of organizing and punctuating, etc.--how, and on the basis of what criteria, are they to be evaluated as essays? The composition rating sheet is geared more to judging another person's writing than to judging one's own; neither does it provide specific guidance in organizing or developing an essay. I do not find definitions or examples of the terms the student is to know and be able to apply to his/her writing, according to Goal 1. What are the criteria for deciding that the student's writing communicates "adequately?" What does "impression" mean? That the reader understands the main idea, the tone, the style, or what? I am also confused about the final evaluation paper and the student's justification for a particular grade. If the student may submit an anonymous evaluation, how will you know which student(s) have handed in the final paper? Also. what weight has his/her grade justification in deciding the final grade?

As for the writing opportunities that are included, I find them to be principally related to description (e.g., of a room, person, role). There is a provision for narration, in the dialogue assignment. Although these types of writing are relevant to creative writing (i.e., creative or "free," as opposed to student themes or research papers), they are not of major significance or, for the most part, even relevant to the writing required in most developmental or freshman composition courses. The opinion paper (which is, in essence, an argument--although not in the formal sense) and the process paper would be useful to the student. However, the opinion is only a paragraph in length, which does not fulfill the term "essay," and the student does not write an individual process paper. What do the students read? Won't most of their later writing be about something they have read? Isn't translation of something read, one of the basic cognitive abilities? How are the activities of the learning package related to that ability? How are the activities related to extrapolation, application, analysis, synthesis, or evaluation?

The fact is, what troubles me in relation to Goal 1 also troubles me in the package as a whole. Although the package may provide for activities that are related to the affective domain (a la Bloom), there is an almost complete lack of activities or of a relationship of the activities that are included to the cognitive domain. Yes, increased awareness and perception may well improve the content of a student's writing. The affect might well be judged through a description assignment. But how often, and in what kinds of courses or, for that matter, in how many life situations, is the student going to need to describe, in the sense he is asked to describe in the assignments? Given the community college and university freshmen with whom I am familiar, in both my own school and in many others in the country, I feel sure you must provide writing activities related to the specific skills that will provide, in turn, opportunities for cognitive development.

Of course, I am only one voice, and my views will certainly not be shared by all of your judges. Naturally, you must be guided by all of us and, in the final analysis, by the majority views. In any event, as I look at my comments as a whole, I think I am mainly concerned about the underlying assumption that certain kinds of behavior are both relevant and transferable to the art (science?) of writing. Second, I am concerned that the activities and/or behaviors are not correlated--at least in the content of the package--with activities that would promote cognitive development. Perhaps a re-thinking of the relationship, if any, of each behavior to composition and to the specific skills therein would result in a restructuring of the package to effect the transfer of the Gestalt techniques to the cognitive areas.

I would like very much to keep in tough with your project. I do want to encourage you in your undertaking and would not have commented at such length unless I saw potential in your work. In addition to the questionnaire, I am returning your package. I took the liberty of pencil-marking a few comments here and there, as I went through it.

My best wishes,

Mary Lou Conlin

EVALUATION CHECKLIST

FOR

CONFLUENT ENGLISH COMPOSITION COURSE

DIRECTIONS: PLEASE CIRCLE THE NUMBER WHICH BEST CHARACTERIZES YOUR RESPONSE

1. Are the goals and objectives of the course appropriate for the first or second-year community college student?

1 (2) 3 (4) 5
Not at all appropriate — Extremely appropriate

2. Are the goals and objectives of the course outline appropriate for a community college course in freshman composition?

1 (2) 3 4 5
Not at all appropriate — Extremely appropriate

3. Are the outcomes referred to in the objectives specific and measurable?

1 2 3 4 (5)
Vague and unmeasurable — Specific and measurable

goal 3: a/b/h

4. Is the method of evaluation consistent with the rationale, goals, and objectives of this course?

of course of student work

1 2 3 (4) (5)
No — Yes

5. Is there an effort to make the objectives and learning activities relevant to the student?

1 2 3 4 (5)
No — Yes

6. Does the course outline attempt to justify the course content to the student?

1 2 3 4 (5)
No — Yes

Our students tend to require more cognitive emphasis

7. Do the learning activities effectively integrate cognitive and affective objectives?

1 2 (3) 4 5
Poor integration — Extremely well integrated

8. Do the learning activities provide an opportunity for the student to master the writing objectives?

1 2 (3) 4 5
No — Yes

9. Do the learning activities provide an opportunity for the student to master the affective objectives?

1 2 3 4 (5)
No — Yes

10. Do the learning activities provide an atmosphere conducive to students' learning how to take risks, experiment, relate to others, and explore new behaviors?

although some activities are rather "out of this world" in composition curriculum

1 4 (5)
No — Yes

11. Do the learning activities facilitate active or passive learner roles?

Both quite well for varying personality of student as preparing activities for "passive" student; yet emphasis is on ACTIVE

1 2 --- (3) Active
Passive

12. Is the course structure conducive to the development of a nourishing learning environment for both teachers and students?

1 2 3 (4) 5
Toxic and unhealthy — Extremely nourishing

13. Are the instructions for implementing the strategies and facilitating the exercises spelled out clearly enough that someone who had not had special training in Gestalt Therapy could use them?

Need more explanation

1 2 (3) 4 5
No — Yes

14. Is it likely that a student completing this course would undergo a change in attitude toward writing or toward English?

1 2 3 (4) 5
No — Yes

15. Would a student completing this course satisfactorily have achieved the necessary competencies to enter the next level course at your institution?

1 2 3 4 5
No — I feel one student would seek more critical — Yes
writing exercises & provide skills for correct Commanding

16. From your comparison of the rationale, goals, and objectives with the learning activities which utilize Gestalt Therapy techniques, is the suitability of this approach to teaching composition at all apparent?

1 2 3 (4) 5
No — But more substance — Yes
would be viable as
literature is large

17. In general, how would you rate the ~~rationale, goals, and objectives~~ for this course?

1 2 3 (4) (5)
Poor — need more than — Excellent
basic success in next course

18. What is your overall evaluation of the learning activities designed for this course?

1 (2) 3 4 (5)
Poor — Excellent

19. Stronger features: Exciting attempt & create workable composition course; provides refreshing ideas

20. Weaker features: Need a more climactic conclusion stronger emphasis on skills

Please feel free to make any additional comment you would like to make.

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Linda,

She was perhaps read with a jaundiced eye as I anticipated the test, and yes, you have approached as all-too-often stereotyped character with a new "refreshed" outlook.

Some ideas:

1) Type a paragraph or more during recital & beginning as we should be able & create atmosphere as everyone would be active rather than some student idle waiting on others & complete exercises

2) Some exercises need explanation, ie, "Ways to Release Tension", the quick description of arms at sides of page, etc.

3) Choose for each class ineffectual after dynamic/creative body & course, some climax/release of needed

4) Like stand over fearless students ways of "awareness"/touch/feel tactics unless a strong academic purpose is expressed

is the curriculum. Your comparing may very, however.

You may find [illegible] in "Economics Emphasizing Toolkit" useful in providing further rationale, descriptions for exercises to be included when these ideas this. If so, I will send an outline.

Abnormal is an interesting attitude.

Your admission of the "total" student is encouraging. Thank you for that and the best to you in completing your degree.

yhr

EVALUATION CHECKLIST

FOR

CONFLUENT ENGLISH COMPOSITION COURSE

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1 Not at all appropriate — 2 — 3 — 4 — (5) Extremely appropriate

3. Are the outcomes referred to in the objectives specific and measurable?

1 Vague and unmeasurable — 2 — (3) — 4 — 5 Specific and measurable

4. Is the method of evaluation consistent with the rationale, goals, and objectives of this course?

1 No — 2 — 3 — 4 — (5) Yes

5. Is there an effort to make the objectives and learning activities relevant to the student?

1 No — 2 — 3 — 4 — (5) Yes

6. Does the course outline attempt to justify the course content to the student?

1 No — 2 — 3 — (4) — 5 Yes

7. Do the learning activities effectively integrate cognitive and affective objectives?

1 Poor integration 2 3 4 (5) Extremely well integrated

8. Do the learning activities provide an opportunity for the student to master the writing objectives?

1 No 2 3 (4) 5 Yes

9. Do the learning activities provide an opportunity for the student to master the affective objectives?

1 No 2 3 4 (5) Yes

10. Do the learning activities provide an atmosphere conducive to students' learning how to take risks, experiment, relate to others, and explore new behaviors?

1 No 2 3 (4) 5 Yes

11. Do the learning activities facilitate active or passive learner roles?

1 Passive 2 3 4 (5) Active

12. Is the course structure conducive to the development of a nourishing learning environment for both teachers and students?

1 Toxic and unhealthy 2 3 4 (5) Extremely nourishing

13. Are the instructions for implementing the strategies and facilitating the exercises spelled out clearly enough that someone who had not had special training in Gestalt Therapy could use them?

1 No 2 3 4 (5) Yes

14. Is it likely that a student completing this course would undergo a change in attitude toward writing or toward English?

1 No 2 3 (4) 5 Yes

15. Would a student completing this course satisfactorily have achieved the necessary competencies to enter the next level course at your institution?

1 No 2 3 4 (5) Yes

16. From your comparison of the rationale, goals, and objectives with the learning activities, which utilize Gestalt Therapy techniques, is the suitability of this approach to teaching composition at all apparent?

1 No 2 3 4 (5) Yes

17. In general, how would you rate the rationale, goals, and objectives for this course?

1 Poor 2 3 (4) 5 Excellent

18. What is your overall evaluation of the learning activities designed for this course?

1 Poor 2 3 (4) 5 Excellent

19. Stronger features: The integration of affective and cognitive is good. I like the idea of having students write about things they experience - they are the expert on that subject. Thus, the subject matter does not get in the way of expression and effective communication - an appropriate goal for comp.

20. Weaker features: The connection between the experience and writing (and literature for that matter) needs to be made more directly. You have provided several experiences before a writing component (except for the journal). Perhaps some guided experiences (writing) could be used to illustrate & use some of the writing techniques they need to develop.

Please feel free to make any additional comment you would like to make.

I really like the idea. I have trouble believing that yr. comp. could convert many english teachers to your proposed Style. A more like this could also be used in lit.

Signature: R. McCrum

Date: April 5, 1977

EVALUATION CHECKLIST

FOR

CONFLUENT ENGLISH COMPOSITION COURSE

DIRECTIONS: PLEASE CIRCLE THE NUMBER WHICH BEST CHARACTERIZES YOUR RESPONSE

1. Are the goals and objectives of the course appropriate for the first or second-year community college student?

1	2	3	(4)	5
Not at all appropriate				Extremely appropriate

2. Are the goals and objectives of the course outline appropriate for a community college course in freshman composition?

1	2	(3)	4	5
Not at all appropriate				Extremely appropriate

3. Are the outcomes referred to in the objectives specific and measurable?

1	2	3	(4)	5
Vague and unmeasurable				Specific and measurable

4. Is the method of evaluation consistent with the rationale, goals, and objectives of this course?

1	2	3	4	(5)
No				Yes

5. Is there an effort to make the objectives and learning activities relevant to the student?

1	2	3	4	(5)
No				Yes

6. Does the course outline attempt to justify the course content to the student?

1	2	3	(4)	5
No				Yes

7. Do the learning activities effectively integrate cognitive and affective objectives?

1 Poor integration 2 3 (4) 5 Extremely well integrated

8. Do the learning activities provide an opportunity for the student to master the writing objectives?

1 No 2 (3) 4 5 Yes

9. Do the learning activities provide an opportunity for the student to master the affective objectives?

1 No 2 3 4 (5) Yes

10. Do the learning activities provide an atmosphere conducive to students' learning how to take risks, experiment, relate to others, and explore new behaviors?

1 No 2 3 4 (5) Yes

11. Do the learning activities facilitate active or passive learner roles?

1 Passive 2 3 4 (5) Active

12. Is the course structure conducive to the development of a nourishing learning environment for both teachers and students?

1 Toxic and unhealthy 2 3 (4) 5 Extremely nourishing

13. Are the instructions for implementing the strategies and facilitating the exercises spelled out clearly enough that someone who had not had special training in Gestalt Therapy could use them?

1 No 2 3 (4) 5 Yes

14. Is it likely that a student completing this course would undergo a change in attitude toward writing or toward English?

1 No 2 3 4 (5) Yes

15. Would a student completing this course satisfactorily have achieved the necessary competencies to enter the next level course at your institution?

1 2 (3) 4 5
No Yes

16. From your comparison of the rationale, goals, and objectives with the learning activities, which utilize Gestalt Therapy techniques, is the suitability of this approach to teaching composition at all apparent?

1 2 3 (4) 5
No Yes

17. In general, how would you rate the rationale, goals, and objectives for this course?

1 2 3 (4) 5
Poor Excellent

18. What is your overall evaluation of the learning activities designed for this course?

1 2 3 (4) 5
Poor Excellent

19. Stronger features: The affective domain is evident. Activities should provide excellent motivation for desired student performance. Creativity and originality are commendable - and a good way to

20. Weaker features: I have concern about the skills or competencies which will be derived without more direct instruction in the areas of the organization, development and mechanics of writing.

Please feel free to make any additional comment you would like to make.

Signature: Flora deHart

203 Date: 4/5/77

Route 2, Box 515
Farmville, Virginia 23901
April 5, 1977

Ms. Linda Tixier, English Department
Miami-Dade Community College
11380 NW 27th Ave.
Miami, Florida 33167

Dear Linda:

I have reviewed your package "A Confluent Approach to English Composition." It is quite creative and students should find the activities challenging. The affective domain, unfortunately, has long been neglected by most educators. Your focus in this area is refreshing.

There were a few concerns as I read through the material:

(1) Will the student be able to volunteer for the course? I would guess that some students might prefer not to enroll in a course that could reveal aspects of themselves which they might wish to conceal. Students with bizarre background experiences or who are seriously neurotic could develop guilt and/or shame when asked to share feelings and experiences with classmates.

(2) You mention that the course eveluation might be anonymous. For best results, you might consider anonymity for all evaluations. Unfortunately, most students have been conditioned to say those things which will please the teacher. Twelve years of conditioning in public schools will not likely be erased in one term of college.

(3) I found criteria relating to organization, development, and mechanics of written communication to lack precision. For example, the statement "mechanical and careless errors will be considered part of the evaluation" makes me uncomfortable. How much weight will be attached to these types of errors? How will organization and development be evaluated?

I am well aware of the difficulty of removing subjectivity from evaluation of written communication, but specific criteria will result in increased objectivity by the evaluator and the reduction of anxiety on the part of the student. As one professor used to say, "Most of us have a relatively low tolerance for ambiguity."

Ultimately, my concern is that the student be able to cope when he/she enters the "real" world. Certainly your approach should bring an improved self-concept to most students as they learn more about themselves and others. It is important that this new self-image be reinforced with self-confidence generated by competency in the skills. In order to achieve this competency, specificity of evaluative criteria will be of assistance.

Overall, I am favorably impressed and will be looking forward to receiving other materials in Texas.

Sincerely yours,

Flora

 Flora de Hart

EVALUATION CHECKLIST

FOR

CONFLUENT ENGLISH COMPOSITION COURSE

DIRECTIONS: PLEASE CIRCLE THE NUMBER WHICH BEST CHARACTERIZES YOUR RESPONSE

1. Are the goals and objectives of the course appropriate for the first or second-year community college student?

1 Not at all appropriate — 2 — 3 — 4 — (5) Extremely appropriate

2. Are the goals and objectives of the course outline appropriate for a community college course in freshman composition?

1 Not at all appropriate — 2 — 3 — 4 — (5) Extremely appropriate

3. Are the outcomes referred to in the objectives specific and measurable?

1 Vague and unmeasurable — 2 — 3 — 4 — (5) Specific and measurable

4. Is the method of evaluation consistent with the rationale, goals, and objectives of this course?

1 No — 2 — 3 — 4 — (5) Yes

5. Is there an effort to make the objectives and learning activities relevant to the student?

1 No — 2 — 3 — 4 — (5) Yes

6. Does the course outline attempt to justify the course content to the student?

1 No — 2 — 3 — 4 — (5) Yes

7. Do the learning activities effectively integrate cognitive and affective objectives?

1 Poor integration 2 3 4 5 Extremely well integrated

8. Do the learning activities provide an opportunity for the student to master the writing objectives?

1 No 2 3 4 5 Yes

9. Do the learning activities provide an opportunity for the student to master the affective objectives?

1 No 2 3 4 5 Yes

10. Do the learning activities provide an atmosphere conducive to students' learning how to take risks, experiment, relate to others, and explore new behaviors?

1 No 2 3 4 5 Yes

11. Do the learning activities facilitate active or passive learner roles?

1 Passive 2 3 4 5 Active

12. Is the course structure conducive to the development of a nourishing learning environment for both teachers and students?

1 Toxic and unhealthy 2 3 4 5 Extremely nourishing

13. Are the instructions for implementing the strategies and facilitating the exercises spelled out clearly enough that someone who had not had special training in Gestalt Therapy could use them?

1 No 2 3 4 5 Yes

14. Is it likely that a student completing this course would undergo a change in attitude toward writing or toward English?

1 No 2 3 4 5 Yes

15. Would a student completing this course satisfactorily have achieved the necessary competencies to enter the next level course at your institution?

1 No 2 3 4 (5) Yes

16. From your comparison of the rationale, goals, and objectives with the learning activities, which utilize Gestalt Therapy techniques, is the suitability of this approach to teaching composition at all apparent?

1 No 2 3 4 (5) Yes

17. In general, how would you rate the rationale, goals, and objectives for this course?

1 Poor 2 3 4 (5) Excellent

18. What is your overall evaluation of the learning activities designed for this course?

1 Poor 2 3 4 (5) Excellent

19. Stronger features: the rationale, description and detail of each exercise is specific and precise.

20. Weaker features: Marvelous for the student. How does teacher fit enough time in his schedule to read and make spelling, grammar, etc. corrections & suggestions?

Please feel free to make any additional comment you would like to make.

Signature: Marty Fromm

207 Date: 3/16/77

EVALUATION CHECKLIST

FOR

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1 Not at all appropriate — 2 — 3 — 4 — (5) Extremely appropriate

3. Are the outcomes referred to in the objectives specific and measurable?

1 Vague and unmeasurable — 2 — 3 — (4) — 5 Specific and measurable

4. Is the method of evaluation consistent with the rationale, goals, and objectives of this course?

1 No — 2 — 3 — (4) — 5 Yes

5. Is there an effort to make the objectives and learning activities relevant to the student?

1 No — 2 — 3 — 4 — (5) Yes

6. Does the course outline attempt to justify the course content to the student?

1 No — 2 — 3 — 4 — (5) Yes

7. Do the learning activities effectively integrate cognitive and affective objectives?

1	2	3	4	(5)
Poor integration				Extremely well integrated

8. Do the learning activities provide an opportunity for the student to master the writing objectives?

1	2	3	(4)	5
No				Yes

9. Do the learning activities provide an opportunity for the student to master the affective objectives?

1	2	3	4	(5)
No				Yes

10. Do the learning activities provide an atmosphere conducive to students' learning how to take risks, experiment, relate to others, and explore new behaviors?

1	2	3	4	(5)
No				Yes

11. Do the learning activities facilitate active or passive learner roles?

1	2	3	4	(5)
Passive				Active

12. Is the course structure conducive to the development of a nourishing learning environment for both teachers and students?

1	2	3	(4)	5
Toxic and unhealthy				Extremely nourishing

13. Are the instructions for implementing the strategies and facilitating the exercises spelled out clearly enough that someone who had not had special training in Gestalt Therapy could use them?

1	2	3	4	(5)
No				Yes

14. Is it likely that a student completing this course would undergo a change in attitude toward writing or toward English?

1	2	3	4	(5)
No				Yes

15. Would a student completing this course satisfactorily have achieved the necessary competencies to enter the next level course at your institution?

1 2 3 4 (5)
No Yes

16. From your comparison of the rationale, goals, and objectives with the learning activities, which utilize Gestalt Therapy techniques, is the suitability of this approach to teaching composition at all apparent?

1 2 (3) 4 5
No Yes

17. In general, how would you rate the rationale, goals, and objectives for this course?

1 2 3 4 (5)
Poor Excellent

18. What is your overall evaluation of the learning activities designed for this course?

1 2 3 4 (5)
Poor Excellent

19. Stronger features: Good objectives and several alternatives and suggestions for student learning in accomplishing these objectives.

20. Weaker features: A suggestion on keeping the journal would be to compare the beginning of impressions and feelings written at the beginning with the same at the end of the course and point out to students how much things have improved.

Please feel free to make any additional comment you would like to make.

Signature: Dr. Dawn L. Hall

Date: 4-7-77

EVALUATION CHECKLIST

FOR

CONFLUENT ENGLISH COMPOSITION COURSE

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1. Are the goals and objectives of the course appropriate for the first or second-year community college student?

1 Not at all appropriate — 2 — 3 — (4) — 5 Extremely appropriate

2. Are the goals and objectives of the course outline appropriate for a community college course in freshman composition?

1 Not at all appropriate — 2 — 3 — (4) — 5 Extremely appropriate

3. Are the outcomes referred to in the objectives specific and measurable?

1 Vague and unmeasurable — 2 — (3) — 4 — 5 Specific and measurable

4. Is the method of evaluation consistent with the rationale, goals, and objectives of this course?

1 No — 2 — 3 — 4 — (5) Yes

5. Is there an effort to make the objectives and learning activities relevant to the student?

1 No — 2 — 3 — 4 — (5) Yes

6. Does the course outline attempt to justify the course content to the student?

1 No — 2 — 3 — 4 — 5 Yes

what course outline?

7. Do the learning activities effectively integrate cognitive and affective objectives?

1 Poor integration — 2 — 3 — (4) — 5 Extremely well integrated

8. Do the learning activities provide an opportunity for the student to master the writing objectives?

1 No — 2 — (3) I have some concern about the organizational skills — 4 — 5 Yes

9. Do the learning activities provide an opportunity for the student to master the affective objectives?

1 No — 2 — 3 — 4 — (5) Yes

10. Do the learning activities provide an atmosphere conducive to students' learning how to take risks, experiment, relate to others, and explore new behaviors?

1 No — 2 — 3 — 4 — (5) Yes

11. Do the learning activities facilitate active or passive learner roles?

1 Passive — 2 — 3 — 4 — (5) Active

12. Is the course structure conducive to the development of a nourishing learning environment for both teachers and students? Environments, in my experience, are created by people, not by course structures. How nourishing an environment is, is determined by the instructor in this case.

1 Toxic and unhealthy — 2 — 3 — Extremely nourishing

13. Are the instructions for implementing the strategies and facilitating the exercises spelled out clearly enough that someone who had not had special training in Gestalt Therapy could use them? Instructions are clear enough for I wonder if a non-Gestalt oriented teacher would be able to function effectively in this conceptual framework

1 No — 5 Yes

14. Is it likely that a student completing this course would undergo a change in attitude toward writing or toward English?

1 No — 2 — 3 — 4 — 5 Yes

my belief — That this would depend on the instructor: not the course content per se.

15. Would a student completing this course satisfactorily have achieved the necessary competencies to enter the next level course at your institution?

1 2 3 4 (5)
No Yes

16. From your comparison of the rationale, goals, and objectives with the learning activities, which utilize Gestalt Therapy techniques, is the suitability of this approach to teaching composition at all apparent?

1 2 3 (4) 5
No Yes

17. In general, how would you rate the rationale, goals, and objectives for this course?

1 2 3 (4) 5
Poor Excellent

18. What is your overall evaluation of the learning activities designed for this course?

1 2 3 (4) 5
Poor Excellent

19. Stronger features: I especially like the way the final product that students do grows out of their total experience with the course

2 concerns: 1) I wonder whether a person without Gestalt train could do the activities effectively. The activities are clearly described; however, the internalized knowing of the significa & possibilities inherent in the experiences, I think can only come thru extensive Gestalt work. 2) I would want to spend more time helping students learn to organize/shape/edit their private content into a public product — more of the "organizing working" that goes on at Kresge with that process

20. ~~Weaker features:~~

Please feel free to make any additional comment you would like to make.

Signature: Margaret Holland
Date: March 27, 1977

Hi Linda

I find I'm learning a lot about me as I read your stuff. Will try to share some of my feeling-responses with ya. I don't know your committee so I don't know whether you'll want to share these scrawled, personal (non-conventionally academic) notes or not — do as you like. They're a journal-like enjoyment for me.

I like the ice breakers & wish there were more. I find I have to re-break the ice for 1st several sessions. To jump to awareness continuum work at 2nd session seems a large leap to me — especially without some warm-up/ice breaker whatever work 1st. Are awareness pages worksheets to be done in class? unclear to me

* Textures of names is a neato - will try that

"Zen Now" Do you instruct students prior to film to focus on sensory visual experience? I want to try this - seems to me it will illustrate the L-R hemisphere differences in perception that I'm interested in - L hem. dominants will follow the cognitive verbal message etc.

=Face looking - description - what if students went back to awareness categories to determine kinds of awareness they were using?

Intro to G. Therapy is where I find me feeling less with you. I use my understanding of G. in order to operate differently in classroom. My belief is that you do the same. What doesn't

(Damn my understanding of it)

seem necessary for me is the teaching of G. language & theory to the students in the name of Fr. comp. My own preference for cognitive input is general semantics - a use of languaging concepts in the context of awareness / present centeredness / non verbal process / fantasy - imagery etc.

I'm curious about TD/UD chair work. Has it worked effectively for you in your classes? My sense of it is that initial TD/UD stuff might go better in journals - since it seems kinda threatening to me - but I've never tried it - I think I just may - might be interesting for my pre-interns to work around - especially their "teaching" TD-UDs: — "A good teacher should —"

* I like the 'organizing writing" sheet. I find I need to give freshmen a lot of concrete help with this part of writing process. And I like (agree with you) having them create a lot of concrete stuff to organize later.

Non-verbal communication exercises - how 'bout some easy quickies for warm up - the "can't-see - must-see - please see" is quite powerful in my experience

Dream work. You might have included some of the Senoi stuff. Also - how about some help/suggestions for students remembering dreams? I also find that my students are fascinated when I share strategies for remembering dreams.

Projection — I like these - also have used

• liked The Tree notion from Comp for Personal Growth
(I sometimes have my students do a collage as a course evaluation/final meaning-making - projection activity)

"I See-I Imagine" exercise - I like the way you set this up as a game almost. I would want to use it to springboard into understanding of meaning-making process - awareness of where meaning comes from/of difference between map & territory

Tues AM

Enjoyed chatting with you last nite - wish • want to talk some more about your work - especially what has happened in classes where you've done these experiences. my personal belief = That course content even when described as Gestalt activities cannot be separated from the person doing the leading - teaching. Your yrs. of Gestalt enable you to do stuff that another teacher - even if she wanted to - couldn't do. Part of my basis for saying this is that sometimes my students will try to do an activity that I've either done as demo lesson with kids or done with my class & they'll come back with horror stories - esp around kids unwilling to try/do whatever. What I now know about me is that I somehow (largely non-verbally I think) create an atmosphere of openness - permission et

& I don't yet know how - in a brief methods course - to help other folks learn to do it — not sure it's possible 'cause it comes out of my combined yrs. of Teaching + Gestalt experience. Anyhow - that's an issue I think you're gonna have to look at, at some point.

Good luck with your committee — I hope they're open - accepting folks. Let's keep in contact

Margaret

EVALUATION CHECKLIST

FOR

CONFLUENT ENGLISH COMPOSITION COURSE

DIRECTIONS: PLEASE CIRCLE THE NUMBER WHICH BEST CHARACTERIZES YOUR RESPONSE

1. Are the goals and objectives of the course appropriate for the first or second-year community college student?

1 Not at all appropriate — 2 — 3 — 4 — (5) Extremely appropriate

2. Are the goals and objectives of the course outline appropriate for a community college course in freshman composition?

1 Not at all appropriate — 2 — 3 — 4 — (5) Extremely appropriate

3. Are the outcomes referred to in the objectives specific and measurable?

1 Vague and unmeasurable — 2 — 3 — (4) — 5 Specific and measurable

4. Is the method of evaluation consistent with the rationale, goals, and objectives of this course?

1 No — 2 — 3 — (4) — 5 Yes

5. Is there an effort to make the objectives and learning activities relevant to the student?

1 No — 2 — 3 — (4) — 5 Yes

6. Does the course outline attempt to justify the course content to the student?

1 No — 2 — 3 — 4 — (5) Yes

7. Do the learning activities effectively integrate cognitive and affective objectives?

1 Poor integration 2 3 4 5 Extremely well integrated

8. Do the learning activities provide an opportunity for the student to master the writing objectives?

1 No 2 3 4 5 Yes

9. Do the learning activities provide an opportunity for the student to master the affective objectives?

1 No 2 3 4 5 Yes

10. Do the learning activities provide an atmosphere conducive to students' learning how to take risks, experiment, relate to others, and explore new behaviors?

1 No 2 3 4 5 Yes

11. Do the learning activities facilitate active or passive learner roles?

1 Passive 2 3 4 5 Active

12. Is the course structure conducive to the development of a nourishing learning environment for both teachers and students?

1 Toxic and unhealthy 2 3 4 5 Extremely nourishing

13. Are the instructions for implementing the strategies and facilitating the exercises spelled out clearly enough that someone who had not had special training in Gestalt Therapy could use them?

1 No 2 3 4 5 Yes

14. Is it likely that a student completing this course would undergo a change in attitude toward writing or toward English?

1 No 2 3 4 5 Yes

15. Would a student completing this course satisfactorily have achieved the necessary competencies to enter the next level course at your institution?

1 2 3 4 5
No Yes

16. From your comparison of the rationale, goals, and objectives with the learning activities, which utilize Gestalt Therapy techniques, is the suitability of this approach to teaching composition at all apparent?

1 2 3 4 5
No Yes

17. In general, how would you rate the rationale, goals, and objectives for this course?

1 2 3 4 5
Poor Excellent

18. What is your overall evaluation of the learning activities designed for this course?

1 2 3 4 5
Poor Excellent

19. Stronger features: The student will be motivated to do the work because writing is not viewed from the "usual" point of view, but rather growing out of experience. The major goals of the course, communication and awareness are achieved in the materials. The journal approach is exciting and innovative, and should encourage maximum student involvement since the subject is "you" instead of "what did you do last summer ....." see (p. a)

20. Weaker features: Need to state behavioral objectives more ~~xxxx~~ clearly; the learning activities are well designed, but it is not always clear what you want the learner to do; The evaluation is also weak; I found the affective evaluation, but test items could be constructed on the cognitive level, although I realize this is not the major thrust of the course.

Please feel free to make any additional comment you would like to make.

Signature: Dr. Richard L. Morgan

Date: 3/25/77

WESTERN PIEDMONT COMMUNITY COLLEGE
STUDENT SERVICES MORGANTON, NORTH CAROLINA 28655

p. a.

George Brown's concept of confluent education is an exciting one, and this work represents a real attempt to do just this in the area of English Composition. Perhaps too much emphasis is placed on the Gestalt approach (others could be added to make it more eclectic) but I was greatly impressed to see a course designed to activate the "right side of the brain" and appeal to the student's affective domain. The Journal idea is excellent and is a much more facilitative way of teaching English comp than the usual ho-hum method. Some use of Ira Progoff's At A Journal Workshop: The Basic Text for Using the Intensive Journal, particularly his strategies for seeing patterns in one's Journal, might add to this course. In a day when the hue and cry is "back to the basics," etc. I find this course exciting and refreshing. It does what many of us have talked about doing in the classroom. Ms Tixier is to be commended for her efforts, and hopefully this English 120 course will be taught using her approach. The materials are relevant, the course well designed, and the approachmuch needed.

Richard L. Morgan

EVALUATION CHECKLIST

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1	2	(3)	4	5
Vague and unmeasurable				Specific and measurable

4. Is the method of evaluation consistent with the rationale, goals, and objectives of this course?

1	2	3	4	(5)
No				Yes

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1 2 3 4 (5)
Poor Excellent

18. What is your overall evaluation of the learning activities designed for this course?

1 2 3 4 (5)
Poor Excellent

19. Stronger features: makes excellent integration of writing & being. - encourages writing as a natural activity, rather than as a a written "head-trip."

20. Weaker features: Perhaps needs more explanations for teachers.

Please feel free to make any additional comment you would like to make.

Very impressive!

Signature: Max Painter MD

Date: 3-29-77

the Human Growth Center at Miami-Dade North Campus. It is an experimental program which functions as an adjunct to the Counseling area and which offers personal growth groups both on a credit and a non-credit basis. She is presently Coordinator of the Human Growth Center as well as an Associate Professor of English.

Future plans include additional training and study in group and individual counseling, and concentrated effort in synthesizing her varied backgrounds in literature, counseling, and the occult into teaching approaches, and counseling strategies.